

# *The Life and Teachings of Christ*

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## **Introduction to the Life of Christ**

In studying the life of Jesus it is important that we try to place ourselves, as much as possible, into the social, political, economic, and religious environment of First Century Judaism in Palestine. In part, this is what we will try to do as we explore the life and teachings of Jesus.

But if Jesus entered our own scene today, how would we react to him? Possibly in the same ways as many of his contemporaries reacted – some with curiosity, some with hostility, some with indifference, some with self-righteousness, some with genuine interest, etc., etc., etc. As we study his life and teachings, you might come to know and understand him better. How then might your opinion of him change? Most of his contemporaries had problems with him. They did not seem to know how to respond to (1) his teaching, (2) his claims for himself, and (3) the demands he made on his followers. If he presented himself into our society today, how might you react to him?

This course will be a challenge to you if you try to enter their world, see their points of view, and understand why they responded as they did to Jesus and his message. In doing this you might find yourself asking some of the same questions as they asked.

Regardless of what one might personally think of Jesus, history tells us that he cannot be ignored. His impact of civilization, culture, history, and human values is undeniable. We cannot understand the history of civilization without including the influence of Jesus. Yet, he died in the prime of his life, at about thirty-three years of age.

# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction to the Intertestamental Period**

### Introduction:

1. In order to understand the New Testament we must understand the backdrop against which it was written.
  - a. This means we have to study the historical, political, social, and religious surroundings of the Gospel accounts.
  - b. The literature of this period offers excellent insights into the life and times of Jesus, and the world into which Christianity was introduced.
2. The historical, political, social, and religious atmosphere in the beginning of the New Testament is quite different from that at the close of the Old Testament.
3. Accounts of the political and religious struggles of the Jews during this period provide important information for us as we study the development of Christianity.

### I. A brief look at the Old Testament background.

- A. The United Kingdom. Saul, David, Solomon the kings of the United Kingdom.
- B. The Divided Kingdom. The division of the kingdoms came at end of Solomon's reign.

1. Northern kingdom -- Kingdom of Israel.
2. Southern kingdom -- Kingdom of Judah.

### C. Captivities of Israel and Judah. The end of nationhood.

1. Captivity of Israel. The northern kingdom was conquered in 722-721 B.C. by Assyrians. See II Kings 17.
2. Captivity of Judah. The southern kingdom was conquered 587-586 B.C. by Babylon. See II Kings 25.
3. The poor, uneducated, and unskilled of the land were left. The educated and upper class populations were taken captive.
4. The Nippur Tablets give some information on conditions in Babylon during Judah's exile. They mention many commercial dealings with the Jews. Therefore we know that the Jews were in industry, commerce and trade even during their captivity. However with most of the Jews the captivity was a very bitter experience. See Ps. 137.

- D. Some Jews fled to Egypt at the time of the Babylonian captivity, and settled on the Island of Elephantine in the Nile River, near the southern border of Egypt.

1. Jeremiah mentions a contingent of Jews going to Egypt, although he had warned them not to do so. They did this thinking they could avoid punishment and Nebuchadnezzar's captivity.
  2. The discovery of the Elephantine Papyri from southern Egypt (Upper Egypt) mentions this colony of Jews and their function.
  3. Jews living in Elephantine held their allegiance to the Jewish homeland (after the Jews returned from Babylon), particularly to the High Priest. Consequently they were looked on with suspicion by many of the Egyptians.
- E. Under the Babylonians literature, art, commerce, and science flourished.
1. A key to the power of their captors (Babylonians and Persians) was the heavy taxes and tribute they levied on their captives.
  2. The Babylonians excelled in astronomy, calculating the length of a year as 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes, and 41 seconds. Present day calculations show this to be only about 26 minutes off.

## II. The Persian Period (538-338 B.C.).

- A. This period began during the Old Testament times, but it extends into the Intertestamental Period. The Median and Lydian Empires existed to the north, northeast, and northwest of Babylon. They held their boundaries by treaty.
- B. By 549 B.C. Cyrus was uniting the Persian people and defeated the Medes. He then began a westward movement, striking at Sardis. This city was the capital of the Lydian kingdom, and was located in the western part of modern day Turkey. This was the beginning of the rise of the Persian Empire.
1. Cyrus was a disciple of Zarathushtra (Zoroastrianism), who was a Median religious leader and reformer who lived about 600 B.C.
  2. Evidence of monotheism was present in his teaching. Even Judaism in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. was influenced by his thought.
  3. In 539 B.C. Cyrus overthrew the city of Babylon without a battle. See story of Belshazzar in Daniel 5. After this he proclaimed himself "king of the world, the great king."
- D. The Persian Period. Cyrus encouraged various captive people to return to their own lands.
1. The Post-Exilic Jewish Nation. The first group of Jews returned to Judah (Jerusalem) under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel and they began to rebuild the temple. (538 – 515 B.C.) This temple was dedicated in 515 B.C. See Ezra 1:1-11, 2:68-70, 3:7-13, 5:13-16.
  2. Contrary to Jewish orthodoxy, about 525 B.C. the Jews who had gone to Elephantine began to build a temple of their own. This was just about the same time that Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar were returning to Judea to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. A political disturbance in Egypt about 410-408 B.C. re-

sulted in the destruction of the Elephantine temple.

3. The second group returned under Ezra. The Scribes (New Testament) are said to have risen from him. They reestablished the Law of Moses about 457 B.C., and the Scribes began to be recognized as the interpreters of the Law. In this, they replaced some of the functions of the priests. Later the Pharisees became very influential in this.
4. The third group returned under Nehemiah. They rebuilt the walls of the city of Jerusalem. (445-444 B.C.) There was some overlapping in these returns.
  - a. When the walls were rebuilt under Nehemiah it gave physical security to the reorganized religion.
  - b. During this period, and shortly thereafter the high priest arose as a “Ruler” of the people though he had no political office.

E. The Post-Exilic Jewish nation.

1. The Post-Exilic Community, as these Jews are called, was dedicated to the study of the Law.
2. The synagogue probably developed during this period, but the first archaeological evidence comes from the third century A.D.
3. The synagogue was primarily a place of study and instruction, and never used as a place of sacrifice.

F. About 490 B.C., the Persian king, Darius I (known as Darius the Great, 521-485 B.C.) attempted to go westward into Greece, but failed. However for almost 200 years he retained a firm hold on Asia Minor.

1. After the destruction of the Elephantine temple, the Elephantine Papyri tell of Jews who wrote a letter to the High Priest in Jerusalem asking for help in rebuilding their temple. One of these letters was addressed to the sons of Sanballat, former governor of Samaria who had opposed Nehemiah’s work.
2. The sons of Sanballat did not reply, but the High Priest did, saying they should address their request to the Satrap of the region for help. Finally the Satrap (Ashram) replied, offering help but with the stipulations that no animal sacrifices be offered at the Elephantine site, and that they keep their rituals and worship in strict compliance with the law as found in Deuteronomy.
3. This is important because it shows that the High Priest in Jerusalem exercised great influence (power?) over Jews of the Diaspora (the Dispersion).
4. Later in the New Testament we find Saul of Tarsus, a strongly orthodox Jew, obtaining “letters from the high priest” to carry on his persecutions of Christians in Damascus. Saul later became a Christian, known in as Paul.

G. The Samaritans.

1. They arose from mixed marriages between the people left in the land at the time of the captivity of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Assyrian con-



- querors and other foreigners of low status.
- 2. This caused much prejudice and hatred between themselves and the returning Jews.
- 3. Returning exiles felt socially and theologically superior to the Samaritans.
- 4. A rival religion developed among the Samaritans which centered in their temple worship on Mt. Gerizim rather than at the temple in Jerusalem. In John 4 the woman Jesus encountered at Jacob's well refers to this, although the Samaritan temple was not actually standing at that time.

### III. The Greek Period, Part I. (359 – 323 B.C.) Philip of Macedon through Alexander the Great.

- A. Philip of Macedon. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. political influence began slowly moving from the West toward the Middle East. Philip of Macedon was able to form a confederation of many of the Greek city-states (except Sparta), uniting them for self-protection. Although he was not really the ruler of these independent cities, for all practical purposes he exercised basic control.
  - 1. Philip had planned to invade Asia Minor, but he was assassinated in 336 B.C., shortly before he could execute his plans. Alexander the Great, Philip's son, became ruler of what turned out to be the Greek Empire. Alexander had been the pupil of Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher.
  - 2. Very early in his life he showed signs of being a promising young soldier and politician. At age 16 he was a provincial governor, a general in the army at age 18 and king at age 20. He quickly united northern Greece (Macedonia), with the southern part of Greece (Achaia).
- B. In 334 Alexander crossed the Hellespont (modern day Dardanelles) into Asia Minor challenging Persia's rulership there. Moving through Cilicia (modern day Turkey) and defeating Darius III, he progressed on through Syria and Palestine down into Egypt.
  - 1. Although he conquered Palestine, he allowed the Jews to "live according to their ancestral law."
  - 2. He founded a great city at the western mouth of the Nile River and named it after himself, Alexandria. He planned for Alexandria to become a thriving center for Greek culture.
- C. From Egypt he moved north and east, across the Euphrates, and in a series of victories, crushed the Persian Empire, moving as far east as India. His troops, already disgruntled because they had been away from home so long, rebelled and refused to go further. Alexander then returned with his army to Babylon where he died in 323 B.C.
- D. He left the imprint of Greek culture over all of the lands he conquered, but failed to unite the East and West in any sort of political sense.

1. The Greek language became almost universal, and it made an important contribution to the environment of early Christianity.
  2. The Jews of the Dispersion began to be Hellenized more readily because they were away from their homeland, and the influence of Alexander was felt strongly throughout the world. Some Jews however held strongly to the Law in an effort to withstand Greek influence. The strongly orthodox Jews of the Dispersion as well as those who were home-born placed strong emphasis on Sabbath keeping, circumcision, and the Law.
- E. The contributions of the Greeks to the background of the New Testament and life of Jesus were:
1. Greek language.
  2. Greek culture.
  3. Education.

#### IV. The Greek Period, Part II. The situation after Alexander. (323 – 167 B.C.)

##### A. The Empire after the death of Alexander.

1. At his death in 323 B.C. Alexander had no logical successor, and his generals fought among themselves for control of the empire.
2. This caused the empire to begin breaking up. Between the years 301 and 275 B.C., the rulership was divided among three generals who had served under Alexander. They were Antigonus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. Effectively this resulted in three separate empires, which existed in one way or another until the expansion of Rome.

##### B. Seleucus received Asia Minor, Syria, Babylon/Persia, Antigonus received Macedonia (northern Greece), and Ptolemy received Egypt.

1. The Ptolemy dynasty expanded from Egypt to Cyrene, Lycia, and Cypress.
2. The Ptolemy dynasty invaded and dominated Palestine at times, and Palestine became a sort of buffer state between the Seleucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt.,
3. The Jews suffered a great deal from the Ptolemies because of persecutions against them.
4. The Seleucids were in Asia Minor and Palestine. Because of the ambitions of the Ptolemies, Palestine became a buffer state between Syria and Egypt, and was intermittently ruled by the Seleucids and Ptolemies.

##### C. Although the Ptolemies controlled Palestine much of the time, their sovereignty was often challenged by the Seleucid rulers from Syria who claimed that it was part of their own territory going back to the death of Alexander

1. From that time until the Romans came into Palestine (about 63 B.C.) the his-

tory of Palestine is closely tied to Syria.

2. However, until Roman influence came into Egypt (about 168 B.C.) Palestine was a buffer state between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. This resulted in confusion among the Jewish population concerning their political loyalties. Many of the Jews changed their allegiance somewhat readily and welcomed the new rulers. Later this attitude underwent radical changes among the more orthodox Jews.
- D. Syria advocated policies designed to promote territorial unity. Religion was an important factor. Therefore they disapproved of “strange Jewish separatism.” Syria, under the Seleucids was strongly Hellenized, and some of the younger Jewish priests in Jerusalem took up with this Hellenization. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes = “God-Manifest”) 175-163 B.C. came on the scene, and became very impatient with the Jews.
- E. Roman influence began rising in Italy and the West about 190 B. C., but it was not until later that Rome was able to conquer Palestine and parts of the Middle East.
1. A Jewish group called the Hasidim (pietists) arose in opposition to these Hellenizing influences, holding strongly to the “traditions of the Jewish elders.” They are usually considered to be predecessors of the Pharisees in their doctrine.
  2. Rome continued to rise rapidly and strongly, especially in Egypt. By 167 B.C. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) moved from Syria through Palestine into Egypt where he confronted the Romans who had also entered Egypt. While speaking to Antiochus, the Roman envoy of the senate, Popilius Laenas, is said to have drawn a circle around Antiochus, instructing him not to get out of the circle until he had agreed to withdraw the Syrian troops from Egypt.
  3. Humiliated and embittered, Antiochus returned to Syria via Jerusalem determined to destroy the Jew's religion.
    - a. More Pagan altars were erected throughout Palestine, he ordered the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) destroyed, and the Sabbath and other religious observances discontinued under pain of death.
    - b. In addition the Jewish practice of circumcision was forbidden. His greatest act of sacrilege against the Jews was to sacrifice a pig on the temple altar. These acts led to the Maccabean Revolt.

## V. Some Jewish Religious Developments.

- A. The constant war experienced by the Jews during these years had profound effects on the nation. Some of these were:
1. Polarization, particularly of the youth against their elders.
  2. Jews of the Diaspora many times had different views (religious and political)

from the home born Jews.

3. The Jewish idea and practice of theocracy underwent change.
4. An attitude of denial became evident in some Jewish quarters. (See John 8:31-33. "We have not been in bondage to anyone.")

B. Hellenization of the Jews. Some of the Jews, particularly of the Diaspora became secularized, diminishing their bond to the Palestinian homeland. This led to a division between the religionists and secularists. This change in political domination caused some to want yield to those in power, namely the Syrians.

C. The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament.

1. Jews of the Diaspora, those living outside of Palestine, still had a profound reverence for the Law, and were very zealous for their national religious identity. The Old Testament Scripture was written in the Hebrew language, but their common language had changed to Greek. Many of them saw the need to have a Greek translation of their scriptures, particularly to retain the religious loyalty of the youth..
2. Sometime between 284 and 245 B.C. this work was completed, and the resulting translation was called the Septuagint (LXX). It was probably done in Alexandria, Egypt because this was the center of strong Jewish education.

VI. The Maccabean Period (167-- 63 B. C.) This is the story of the revolt of the Jews against the Seleucids of Syria.

A. The profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes resulted in a small band of Jews organizing a revolt. It was led by the Hasmonean family. Mattathias, the father was very strongly conservative concerning Jewish "orthodoxy."

1. Pagan sacrifice or not? Mattathias was an aged priest living in Modein, a small town in the hills northwest of Jerusalem.
2. He was summoned by the Syrians to a pagan sacrifice in Modein because he was a prominent citizen of the city. He refused to participate in the pagan sacrifice. However, a fellow Jew abandoned his Jewish faith and participated. Mattathias was infuriated at this, and arose and killed the Jewish man, and also the Syrian officer in charge.

B. The Hasmonean family.

1. Mattathias and his five sons fled to the hills, and were joined by a small band of Jewish religious zealots.
2. Some Jews however sided with the Syrians. Some of these rebels found themselves in a civil war. Others among the Jews were fighting the Syrians in a guerrilla conflict, so the nation was severely divided.
3. Mattathias, shortly before his death appointed his son Judas to be the leader of those opposing the Syrians.

- a. Judas received the nickname Maccabeus which meant the “the hammerer.”
  - b. This took place about 167 B.C., the year Antiochus profaned the temple.
  - c. Although the band was small in number, their success at surprise attack with heavy blows and speedy withdrawal into the hills made them much stronger than the Syrian armies.
  - d. Antiochus died in October 165 B.C. while on a military campaign in Persia, but Judas Maccabeus did not learn of his death until after the city of Jerusalem was recaptured.
- C. Jerusalem recaptured. In 164 B.C., about a year after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, Judas led an attack on Jerusalem and recaptured much of the city, including the temple mound. The temple area was ceremonially cleansed the temple was rededicated in December 164 B.C.
1. The national Feast of Dedication was established to commemorate this occasion. See John 10:22 where Jesus attended this feast.
  2. This became the modern day Jewish celebration of Hanukkah.
  3. Since the war being fought by Judas and his army was thought of as a “holy war” the position of the High Priest continued to rise in importance. The theocratic character of the nation added to this.
    - a. The Hasidim (pietists) began to be thought of as unofficial interpreters of the Law.
    - b. Josephus, the Jewish historian, when covering this time period, makes his first statements about a religious group called the Pharisees.
    - c. The Pharisees are generally considered the theological descendants of the Hasidim, and much of the activities and prestige of the Hasidim fell to the Pharisees.
- D. The Maccabean Period 167-63 B.C. Various rulers (Aristobulus, Alexander Jannaeus, Salome Alexandra, etc.) came and went.
1. From the time of the Maccabean Revolt (167 B.C.) until the Romans arrived, (about 63 B.C.) there was intrigue, vacillation, and strong nationalism among the Jews.
  2. Most of the Jewish loyalists were in central Judea (southern Palestine) for an extended period of time.
  3. Various battles were fought throughout Palestine in order to recapture Jewish territory from the Syrians, and rescue the loyal Jews. Judas and his army did not win all of the battles however.
  4. Shortly after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes his very young son came into power as Antiochus V.
    - a. When rivalry sprang up between two Syrian generals (Lysias and Philip) for control of the new boy king, an unexpected advantage came to Judas Maccabeus and his guerrillas. Lysias, who was occupying Palestine at the



time, was eager to get back to the city of Antioch to protect his position against his rival Philip who had been appointed caretaker for the young King Antiochus V.

- b. Lysias therefore made peace with Judas and left the town of Bethsura (northwest of Hebron in Palestine) where his army had been fighting against Judas and the guerrillas.
- E. The religious revolt had, for the most part, accomplished its goals by this time.
  1. However they abandoned their religious goals and the revolt took on the character of a political conquest.
  2. The Maccabean leaders wanted complete religious independence, but they believed this could not be accomplished without complete political freedom. Therefore the revolt became a strong political movement.
- F. Rome, by 161 B.C. had shown considerable power in the west, and was now moving effectively toward the east, having already conquered Egypt by about 167 B.C.
  1. Shortly after their rebellion began, the Maccabean leaders were soliciting the support of Rome and formed a league of friendship with them.
    - a. This brought very little benefit to the Jews, but brought considerable benefit to the Romans because they were glad to have opportunity to embarrass the Syrians by befriending the Jews.
    - b. The Romans however did not intervene in Palestine for almost 100 years when they took it over in 63 B.C.
  2. The death of Judas. Some of the Jews were against the Maccabean Revolt, and were strongly pro-Syrian. They requested the Syrians to come and fight against Judas and his band of guerillas. Although greatly outnumbered, the Maccabean led Jews defeated the Syrians in their first engagement, but later the Syrians rallied their forces to defeat the Maccabeans.
    - a. Judas was killed in the battle.
    - b. The movement had been losing strength, and this was a heavy blow to its future effectiveness.
  3. Jonathan and Simon. Jonathan, brother of Judas took the leadership, but few Jews followed him.
    - a. He was, for the most part a failure.
    - b. Most of his limited success was due to the internal Syrian problems at home. These problems caused the Syrians to abandon many of their strongholds in Palestine.
    - c. Jonathan renewed the friendship with Rome, and was victorious at Ekron

and Azotus. He was taken prisoner in a later battle, and in 142 B.C. he was killed by Trypho, an insurgent Syrian.

G. At Jonathan's death Simon, another brother of Judas became leader of the revolt.

1. He was given the title Ethnarch of the nation, commander of the army, and was appointed High Priest. Simon was a much stronger leader than Jonathan had been, but was not the equal of Judas.
2. Simon was successful in taking advantage of the continuing internal Syrian conflicts and strife. He recaptured a number of cities, and made Joppa a useable Jewish port.
3. The Jews now proclaimed Simon to be "their leader and high priest forever until a trustworthy prophet shall arise." I Macc. 14:41. It should be noted that he was not a Levite, and this caused problems later.
4. His son-in-law and two of his sons plotted against him and killed him in 134 B.C.
  - a. They also sent agents from Jericho to Jerusalem to murder his other son John Hyrcanus.
  - b. Hyrcanus however heard of the plot and took control of Jerusalem.
  - c. Note how the political and religious interests are closely tied together.

H. Merging of Religious and Political Leaders. John Hyrcanus, (134-104 B.C.) son of Simon was recognized as the rightful heir and successor of his father Simon.

1. He became both ruler and High Priest much as Simon had been, though he did not have the title of ethnarch.
2. For about 5 years Syria again dominated Palestine under Antiochus VII (133-128 B. C.)
3. John Hyrcanus freed the Jews from some of the Syrian domination, after which he expanded Jewish influence.
4. The Sadducees, a Jewish religious sect, were the ruling aristocracy, and made up the Sanhedrin the Jewish high court or council. They opposed the Hasmonean priesthood (that of John Hyrcanus of the Hasmonean family) stating that it had no lawful place since the Law of Moses only authorized the Aaronic order.
5. As noted above, the Samaritans had their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. John Hyrcanus destroyed it and destroyed the city of Samaria. He reigned successfully from 134 – 104 B.C.

I. Various rulers came and went, but for the most part they were of lesser importance than those mentioned above.

1. Most of these rulers tried to expand the borders of the Jewish state, sometimes using mercenaries.
2. What had begun as a religious movement under Judas had now become a full

blown political movement.

3. Some of the religious devotees left their own Jewish heritage to support the Syrians against their own people, believing that there should not be a political struggle.

J. Two notable rulers were brothers, Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II. When their father, Alexander died, they fought for the throne. Aristobulus II finally won.

1. An Idumean named Antipater however had taken the side of Hyrcanus II, seeking to gain power for himself.
  - a. He enlisted the help of a Nabatean King Aretas II to help him depose Aristobulus II and place Hyrcanus II on the throne.
  - b. Note that the Nabateans were people living in the old Edomite territory, around Petra. This was in the south of Judea below the Dead Sea.
2. Both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus appealed to Pompey, a Roman general for help.
  - a. He was in Syria at the time, and welcomed the opportunity to come to Jerusalem.
  - b. He actually took possession of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and the Jews never had political independence in Palestine again until modern times.

## VII. The Rise of Jewish Religious Sects.

A. The temple factor. The Temple was the unifying factor for the nation. Here the priests functioned, and the presence of God was perceived to be there. The Law was primary because it gave religious and civil guidance.

1. Just how the Law should be applied was always an issue. Questions arose about:
  - a. The place of tradition. How much and which traditions should apply to their contemporary life.
  - b. Religion and politics. With political, social, economic, and religious changes having taken place, what was the rightful place of the Law?
  - c. The presence of the Gentiles in Palestine, and the presence of Jews in the Gentile world presented other problems concerning the Law.
2. Some Jews made concessions, especially where business or governmental and/or religious positions forced them to deal with the Gentiles. Others were the “letter of the Law” types.
3. Some religious conservatives withdrew and went to live in a sort of isolated monastic setting.
4. Most Jews never allied themselves with a particular religious sect. Three religious parties or sects arose in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.

## B. The Essenes.

1. Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls about 1946, this was the least known sect of the Jews. However, so much material has come to light since that discovery, that they are now one of the best known groups.
2. In about A.D. 79, a Roman, Pliny the Elder, wrote that the Essenes were a small monastic group north of the Dead Sea. Philo, a Jew of Alexandria and Josephus also agree with this, but give little information about them. The Essenes also lived in various cities, but kept aloof from the populace.
3. They had about 4,000 members. They were very strict in their personal lives, were strong adherents of the Law, but rejected the Pharisaic traditions. They looked for a “multiple” messiah (a prophet and priest, etc.)
4. The Scrolls brought to light the characteristics of this sect of the Jews. The Essene settlement was there prior to the coming of Rome, and the present day ruins were thought to be those of an old Roman outpost of no particular importance. Archaeologists ignored it.
5. The total information gained from excavations at the Dead Sea furnished a great deal of data concerning the beliefs and practices of the Essenes. The discoveries also provided us with various manuscripts of the Old Testament, particularly Isaiah and the Habakkuk commentary.
  - a. Qumran Caves and Scrolls. This settlement, called the Qumran Community copied the Scrolls of the Old Testament and other religious and secular works. The community was made up of a group of priests and others who withdrew from the mainstream of Judaism to live an ascetic life near the northwest shore of the Dead Sea.
  - b. The Scrolls were deposited in caves when the community disbanded and fled to escape the Romans at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.
  - c. Although this took place about 67-70 A.D., the copying and use of the Scrolls began during the Maccabean period, or about 100 B. C.
6. Some of the characteristics of this religious community were:
  - a. Asceticism.
  - b. Celibacy.
  - c. They allowed women and children for those who were married prior to joining the community.
  - d. They held much property in common.
  - e. Theologically they were akin to Pharisees in attitude toward the Law.
  - f. They practiced baptism.
  - g. They held strong Messianic expectation.
7. The Scrolls. Among the important discoveries were:
  - a. Manual of Discipline.
  - b. Commentary on Habakkuk.
  - c. Psalms of Thanksgiving.

- d. War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness.
  - e. Isaiah Scroll.
  - f. Fragments of all Old Testament books except Esther.
8. Some contributions of this discovery.
- a. Permits us to see, in part, how the Old Testament was interpreted at that time.
  - b. Gives insight into a religious sect formerly almost unknown.
  - c. Gives light on some New Testament passages from historical perspective.
  - d. Gives added information on historical background of the New Testament.
  - e. Linguistic contribution. Shows how some words were used at that time.
  - f. Gave us the oldest copy of the book of Isaiah ever discovered.
9. They are thought to have had some ideas about a fixed canon of Old Testament Scriptures (even though it was still undergoing some changes among other Jews).
10. About 1200 graves have been discovered at the site.
11. They were very strict concerning their members, and ranked each member annually to see whether or not he (she) should be placed on any sort of probation. The Essenes left no lasting imprint on Judaism.
12. There has been a considerable amount of controversy over the past 40-50 years as to whether the Qumran community characteristically represented the Essenes, and whether or not John the Baptist might have been an Essene.
- a. Although there are many similarities between John's practices, life style, etc, and the Qumran Community there are also many differences. John has, for the most part been dismissed from the discussions now, though the similarities might suggest some influence factors.
  - b. The various documents found may show that they were not a monolithic community, but a little broader so as to incorporate a number of similar groups or individuals. This is thought to be more compatible with the discoveries and the account given by Josephus.

## VIII. The rise of religious sects.

### A. The Sadducees.

- 1. They may have gotten their name from Zadok (I Kings. 2:35). Many of the Jewish priests had belonged to this sect.
- 2. Origin and beliefs. They had little to do with the Old Testament prophetic writings, but held only to the Law, the Pentateuch.
  - a. Because they were in a quasi religious/political position, they had much contact with the Gentiles (Syrians, Greeks, Romans, etc.). Therefore they



- began to take on many Hellenistic and Roman ways.
- b. Characteristics. They were conservative on many religious issues, and combined these views with power politics. They were for the most part the aristocratic class.
  - c. They had a very practical political philosophy, which emphasized “survival.”
  - d. Therefore they were the most readily influenced by the cultural and political practices of the Hellenistic and Roman culture.
3. Our information concerning the Sadducees comes primarily from writings of their opponents, Josephus (himself a Pharisee), and the New Testament.
    - a. Although they primarily controlled the Temple worship since the priests were usually affiliated with them, they did not hold to the traditions which the Pharisees advocated.
    - b. This did not keep them from having their own traditions concerning the temple worship. Unlike the Pharisees they did not consider their traditions as binding.
  4. After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the Sadducees cease to be. Obviously their political (and religious) directions and leadership had failed.

#### B. The Pharisees.

1. Known as the “separated ones,” the Pharisees advocated many of the same things that the Hasidim (pietists) had advocated prior to the Maccabean revolt. (There are some differences of opinion as to just what they were “separated” from.) The Pharisees, as such, are not mentioned until about 170 B.C. (Josephus)
2. John Hyrcanus claimed to be both king and priest, and the Pharisees rejected this idea. Hyrcanus then turned to the Sadducees for support.
3. At this point, the Pharisees appear as a political party seeking to impose their interpretation of the Law on the nation.
4. Origin and beliefs. The Pharisees were legalists, and very concerned that the traditional interpretations of the Law be observed. They considered the traditions on a level with the Law itself. They were also concerned about strict separation from all things ceremonially unclean, and went through many rituals to purify utensils, etc. They considered themselves the “keepers of orthodoxy,” and the “guardians of truth.”
5. Characteristics. They strongly supported the synagogue and education of youth. Josephus says their numbers came to about 6,000 in the days of Herod the Great who was king at the time of the birth of Jesus. With the coming of the Herodian dynasty the political power of the Pharisees diminished, and they began concentrating more on the life of the nation on a local level rather than trying to work with Rome.
6. After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Judaism that survived was primarily

a result of the Pharisaic movement, and they are primarily responsible for what came to be called “Jewish orthodoxy.”

2. The Roman Period. (63 B.C. – A.D. 70)

A. The conflict between Egypt and Syria. The Ptolemies VS. the Seleucids. Pompey moved from Egypt to Syria, conquering it, and finally came back to Jerusalem.

1. Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II were both trying to gain power (see above). Both had courted the favor of Pompey.
2. Pompey, when he conquered Jerusalem favored Aristobulus, and allowed him to rule the Jews under Roman control.
3. Many revolts against the Romans made Judea a source of constant trouble for Rome. The government changed frequently in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee (the three divisions of Jewish occupied Palestine during the New Testament period). Internal strife in Rome aggravated Palestine's troubles.

B. Herod the Great, in 40 B. C. went to Rome.

1. He was confirmed “King of the Jews” and was allowed to rule under the jurisdiction of Rome.
2. He was a great builder.
3. When he returned to Judea from Rome he had to “win his kingdom.” This he did by 37 B.C. He was under the control of the Roman Senate.
4. He was a very effective king in commercial, agricultural, and architectural enterprises.
5. He was also very ruthless.
  - a. He had two of his sons killed when he suspected them of insurrection.
  - b. He had his wife killed when he suspected her of treason.
  - c. He arranged to have many prominent citizens in Jerusalem killed on the day of his death so that Jerusalem would be in mourning.
  - d. He is the king responsible for the death of the male children at the time of the birth of Jesus.
6. The temple was rebuilt during Herod's reign, and he made it a lavish structure. It was begun in 19 B. C., but was not completed until 63 A. D. The Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was sacked.
7. Herod died in 4 B.C. shortly after the birth of Jesus, and his kingdom was divided.

C. There is much complexity in the political divisions and rulers of Palestine after this.

1. At the death of Herod, Archelaus his son became ruler. Matt. 2:21-23
2. After the death of Archelaus the territory was made a Roman province, and

placed under direct imperial rule. Under this arrangement Roman troops were always present, but there were still kings which ruled certain portions of the country under the jurisdiction of Rome.

3. Pilate was a provincial governor or procurator, A.D. 26-36.
4. Because of the constant political changes, the High Priesthood continued to have strong political importance.

D. Some of the Roman contributions to the New Testament:

1. Law and order. This was strongly enforced by Rome.
2. Roman roads. Roman roads made travel easier.
3. Political unity. Political unity made international travel relatively easy.
4. Postal System. Efficient postal system.

E. Institutions of the Jews in the First Century.

1. The Sanhedrin.
2. The Synagogue.
3. Traditions of the Elders
4. The Temple
5. Aramaic Language

Conclusion:

1. Understanding the background of the New Testament gives us a greater understanding and appreciation of the circumstances, people, and milieu of the New Testament.
2. We can then see more clearly what the writings of the New Testament meant to the original recipients.

## Chapter II

### Introduction to the Gospels

#### Introduction:

1. The first four books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are referred to as the Gospels. The original Greek word, *euaggelion* means “good news or glad tidings.” This was a word in common use among the Greeks expressing the excitement of an especially joyful event such as the birth of a healthy baby or the winning of a battle. The early Christians accepted the message of Christ’s life and teaching as “exciting news” and thus referred to the accounts of his life and teachings as the four Gospels.
2. The Gospels are not biographies of Christ since only about 30 days in his life are described. However, a great deal of space is given to the death and resurrection narratives. This undoubtedly indicates that each of the authors was far more concerned with the death and resurrection than about any other group of events. This, of course, brings up the question of “Why?” “Why was so much emphasis placed on the death and resurrection of Christ?” The answer to this is at the heart of the Christian religion.
3. The Gospels then are a collection of events and teachings, roughly in chronological order, but not strictly so, designed to give us a glimpse of this man whose life and teaching changed the course of world history. Their main purpose is to present four reasonably detailed accounts of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. This is the core message, and is the most important item in studying the Gospels. But in order to understand the crucifixion and resurrection, it is necessary to study the accounts of his life and teachings contained in the four Gospels.

#### I. Matthew.

##### A. Authorship.

1. He was an apostle, also named Levi, a publican (tax collector). Tradition says he later preached in Ethiopia.
2. The Gospel of Matthew is thought to have been written in Syria, perhaps Antioch. Ignatius of Antioch (110-115 A.D.) was the first early Christian writer to quote from it.
3. Matthew’s Gospel is more frequently quoted by early church writers than any other Gospel. This is probably one reason it was placed first in the New Testament.

##### B. The addressees were probably Jews living in Palestine.

1. Papias, 135 A.D., speaks of Matthew writing a gospel to the Jews in their own language (Aramaic).
2. There is no Aramaic language manuscript extant of the Gospel of Matthew,

but since the Greek copies of Matthew do not have the syntax of a translation, it is generally thought that Matthew also wrote his Gospel in the Greek language.

C. Some characteristics.

1. Matthew cites the Old Testament sixty-five times, which is more than any other Gospel writer.
2. Jewish customs are constantly mentioned, but not detailed.
3. Much is said about the traditions of the Jews.
4. Legal righteousness is contrasted with “spirit of the law.” In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus calls attention to “You have heard it was said,” contrasted with “But I say to you.” In view of the Jew-Gentile controversies over the Law during the first century, this would be of special interest to the Jewish Christians.
5. Matthew emphasizes the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom. He speaks of the Kingdom fifty-one times, using “Kingdom of heaven” thirty-two times, “Kingdom of God” three times, and sixteen times in other ways (my kingdom, my Father’s kingdom, the kingdom, etc.). He is the only writer using the expression “kingdom of heaven.”
6. He gives fifteen parables and tells of twenty miracles.
7. He gives an account of the birth of Jesus, telling of the visit of the wise men, but not the visit of the shepherds. He is the only writer who speaks of the escape into Egypt. Each of these items will be covered in class.

D. Structure

1. Matthew gives more biographical details than any of the other Gospels.
2. The Kingdom is a dominant theme in the book.
3. Matthew’s biographical outline shows Jesus rising in popularity among the people, then decreasing in his popularity. This is similar to the outline used in both Mark and Luke, but it is more pronounced in Matthew.
4. **Matt. 4:17.** “*From that time* Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” At the beginning of his ministry Jesus is ascending in popularity with the people.
5. **Matt 12:14-15.** “Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence.” Even though Matthew mentions that the multitudes continued to follow Jesus and he healed them, we begin seeing the plot to kill Jesus being pursued.
6. **Matt. 16: 21.** “*From this time* on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . .” This marks the beginning of a decline in his popularity, ultimately culminating in the cross.

E. General characteristics of the Gospel of Matthew.

1. It has the most miracles of any of the Gospels.



2. It has the longest public discourse of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount.
3. Generally speaking, Matthew gives more attention to the public teachings of Jesus than the other Gospels do. John is the possible exception to this. Much of John's teaching material is in the form of personal dialogue, while Matthew gives more public discourse.
4. About fourteen of Matthew's quotations from the Old Testament have the added phrase, "that it might be fulfilled." This phrase occurs only twice in Mark, five times in Luke, and nine times in John.

## II. Mark.

### A. The Author of the book.

1. Mark lived in Jerusalem, his mother's name was Mary, and the church met in her home. See Acts 12:12
2. He was not an apostle, and is not mentioned in the Gospel accounts. He and his cousin Barnabas (Col. 4:10) went with Paul on first missionary tour, but Mark turned back at Perga. He does not play a prominent role in the New Testament.
  - a. Papias (A.D. 135) says Mark wrote his Gospel under Peter's guidance while he was in Rome.
  - b. Mark is thought by most New Testament scholars to have been the first gospel written.
  - c. It is possible that this Gospel was written as early as A.D. 50, but most scholars place it later, about A.D. 68-70.

### B. Content and structure. Some characteristics of Mark's Gospel.

1. He gives no genealogy or account of Jesus' birth and childhood.
2. He is interested primarily in the deeds of Jesus, rather than the discourses.
3. He represents Jesus quoting from Old Testament about nineteen times.
4. Mark contains only five parables.
5. Mark uses the expression "kingdom of God" fourteen times and "kingdom" two times, but his emphasis on the kingdom is not as strong as that of Matthew.

### A. The character of the writing.

1. It is the shortest of the Gospels, containing only sixteen chapters.
2. In sections where Mark has the same content as Matthew and or Luke, Mark's account is usually longer and more detailed. However, Mark does not cover as many incidents as either Matthew or Luke. There are exceptions to this – *e.g.* the temptations in the wilderness.
3. There is less discourse and teaching material in Mark than in any of the other Gospels.

4. The Gospel of Mark is thought to have been written primarily with the Roman people in mind.

#### C. Structure.

1. The Gospel of Mark may have been a source for much of the material in Matthew and Luke, since the exact language appears at times in all three of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
2. Mark gives the least amount of teachings and parables of Christ, but tells a great deal about his activities – where he went and what he did.
3. Although he quotes the Old Testament a good number of times, only twice does he refer to them as the fulfillment of prophecies.

### III. Luke.

#### A. Authorship.

1. Luke was the only Gentile writer of the New Testament. He was a physician (Col. 4:14), a companion of Paul, and well educated as evidenced in his language. He says that he collected his information from various sources, having spoken to eye witnesses about Jesus. See Lk. 1:1-4. The “we” sections of Acts show the various times when he was with Paul on his journeys.
2. Luke probably wrote his Gospel in the early 70’s. He also wrote the book of Acts.

#### B. Addressee(s) Theophilus (and Greeks).

1. Luke’s Gospel is the only one which mentions an addressee. He addressed his Gospel to Theophilus, apparently a governmental official since he is referred to as “most excellent Theophilus”. This title is used three other times in the New Testament, each of which is addressing a ruler. See Acts 23:26, 24:3, and 26:25.
2. Apparently there were other accounts of some of the work of Jesus circulating during the last 1/3 of the first century, and Luke said he was writing to Theophilus so that he might have an accurate account of Jesus activities and teaching.

#### C. Some characteristics.

1. Some of the narrative details in Luke seem to indicate that his addressee might not have been familiar with circumstances, customs, and geography of Palestine and of Jewish people.
2. He includes information about the birth of Jesus and early events which Matthew does not give (the visit of the shepherds, dedication at the temple, the incident at age 12). Matthew, on the other hand, includes information not given by Luke (the visit of the wise men, Herod’s killing of the children, the escape

into Egypt and return to Nazareth).

3. Luke is the only writer who speaks of birth of John the Baptist.
4. Luke begins his genealogy with Jesus and goes back to God, whereas Matthew begins with Abraham and goes to Jesus. Matthew opens his Gospel with the genealogy (chapter 1), but gives it after the baptism (chapter 3).
5. Luke indicates the general time period of the birth of Christ and his baptism by referring to the reign of the Emperors and other governmental officials. This was the standard practice of historians of that day.
6. He speaks more frequently of prayer than any other Gospel writer. Eleven out of the fifteen times Jesus is spoken of as praying are found in Luke. Much of this is not found in the other Gospels.
7. He records twenty miracles and twenty-three parables. Some of the parables in Luke are not found elsewhere, *e.g.* the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Prayers of the Pharisee and Publican.

#### D. Structure and content.

1. Luke's sequences of certain events is different from that of Matthew and Mark.
2. His account of the resurrection and appearances is brief, and is quite different from the other Gospels.
3. Luke's use of Greek is generally more nearly classical than any of the others.
4. He writes in the style of a real historian by dating certain events in reference to the rulership of certain governmental officials.

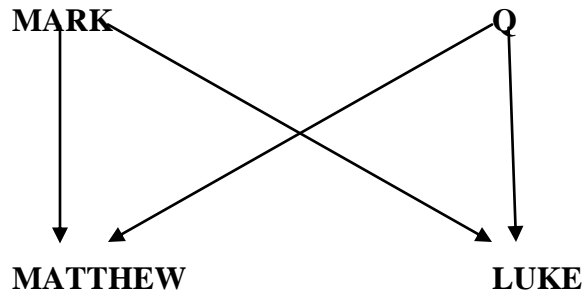
### IV. Synoptic Problem.

- A. Definition of the Synoptic Problem: "The problem of accounting for the likenesses and differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke." Notice that John is not included in this because his Gospel is very different in its approach and content.

1. It should be kept in mind that this is a literary problem, not a theological problem. Description of the problem. Compare Matthew 13:1—9, 18—23 with Mark 4:1-9, 13-20 and Luke 8:1-8, 9-15, and notice the sequence of the language, the likenesses and the differences.

#### B. Possible solutions.

1. Oral tradition.
2. Fragmentary theory.
3. Two-source Theory and the priority of Mark.



V. John. Because of the general character of John's Gospel, his work is not part of the synoptic gospels.

A. Authorship and date of writing.

1. John was an apostle. He is thought to have been "the apostle whom Jesus loved," but is not definitely identified as such in the Gospels. Second century writings identify him as such.
2. John was the last of the apostles to die.
3. His Gospel was probably written A.D. 85-90.
  - a. The John Rylands Fragment is a small piece of papyrus which was discovered in Egypt. The fragment contains a few verses from John 18, and has been dated in the early second century.
  - b. This discovery showed that John could not have been as late as liberal scholars had previously thought.
4. Addressees are probably Greeks although no addressees are identified.

B. Characteristics.

1. Two of John's favorite themes are faith and love. It should be noticed how he uses the word faith in comparison with Paul's use of the term.
2. He uses metaphors of door, lamb, vine, roadway, shepherd, water, light, and others.
3. John gives a brief explanation of some Jewish customs, geography, and places.
4. He deals at length with events during the last week of Jesus' life. (Chapters 12-21), but does so in a different way than the Synoptic writers.
5. The entire book covers only about 20 days of Jesus' life. Chapters 13-19 cover only one day.
6. The Christology of John is very complex. He deals with the divinity – humanity of Jesus, and the Son's relationship to the Father, but not from a Jewish standpoint. The idea of the trinity was completely foreign to the Jews, and was, no doubt, a part of the confusion of the Jews. This is emphasized in John.
7. The vocabulary is the simplest in the entire New Testament, and is very re-

stricted. Yet John is the most theological and philosophical of the Gospels.

8. John uses the word “believe” almost one hundred times, almost always as a verb. He speaks of God as Father one hundred twenty-two times, and speaks of love fifty-seven times. We will see how Jesus’ use of the word “Father” became an insult to the Jews. The prominence of these words should give us insight into the general message of this Gospel.
9. John only uses the word “kingdom” four times. Twice it occurs in the conversation with Nicodemus (kingdom of God), and twice at his trial before Pilate (my kingdom).

#### C. Structure and purpose.

1. John 20:30-31 gives John’s own statement of the purpose of his writing.
2. John is the most Christological of any of the Gospels. John says more about the relationship of the Father to the Son than any of the other Gospel writers.
3. Only a few miracles and no parables appear in John. He frequently uses metaphors however.
4. Each miracle is usually followed by or preceded by a discourse or dialogue on a topic relating to the miracle described. (Feeding the five thousand—Bread of life, Raising Lazarus—Resurrection, etc.) This seems to be a very important part of John’s message. The miracles are spoken of as “signs” which carry a message.
5. In this Gospel, Jesus makes the claims of his Messiahship more clearly than in any of the others.

# Chapter III

## John's Prologue

John 1:1-18

### Introduction:

1. It is good to remember that the Gospel of John was probably written to Greek readers. Consequently some of the concepts, particularly in the prologue, have strong Greek content and thought.
  2. In order to understand this gospel we must keep the prologue always in mind.
  3. John basically says, "If you want to understand what I am about to write, you need to understand the *person about whom* I'm writing."
  4. The thesis of the Gospel of John is that Jesus is not just the revealer of God's teachings, but he is, in fact, the revealer of God himself. The prologue offers a philosophical as well as theological basis for this.
  5. In the Prologue, John uses some very descriptive and important words which he applies to Jesus. It is interesting that five of these words are not used anywhere else in his Gospel, although some of them occur elsewhere in the New Testament. These five are:
    - a. πληρωμα, *plēroma* (fullness, full measure 1:16)
    - b. σκηνουν, *skēnoun* (dwelt among us 1:14),
    - c. μονογενης Θεος, *monogenēs Theos* (only begotten God – only one of this kind, 1:14)
    - d. ειναι εις τον κολπον, *einai eis ton kolpon* (in the bosom, 1:18)
    - e. εξηγησατο, *exēgēsato* (to declare, or to set forth in language, 1:18)
  6. Throughout this Gospel, John is going to emphasize two basic ideas:
    - a. The relationship of Jesus Christ to the Father, and
    - b. The fact of the incarnation. Jesus is God in the flesh.
  7. Out of these two concepts a third element will come to light which is dependent on these two. That is the Messiahship of Christ. John will show that without the Father-Son relationship of God and Jesus Christ, there could be no valid Messiahship of Jesus.
- I. John 1:1-2. "In the beginning was the Word." Three propositions are laid down in vs. 1. (1) The pre-existence of the "Word" λογος (*logos*). That is, the λογος was present "In the beginning," and is therefore not a created being or "lesser" God. (2) "The Word (λογος) was with God." Literally "among God." (3) "The Word (λογος) was God." This is a declaration of the divinity of the Word, λογος.

- A. His beginning point. In his Gospel, John gives history – history of the Christ – but he does not begin with history. He begins with Christology, which tells us something of the road he is going to travel.
  1. He gives his Christology. Note the philosophical background.
    - a. This is a place where background information enhances our understanding and appreciation of the text.
    - b. It becomes a summary of the Gospel from a philosophical viewpoint. See below for further explanation of the value of this.
  2. He is going to affirm that the “Word,” that is, the **λογος**, was with God in the beginning. This takes us back to Gen. 1:1.
  3. He has stated that the Word, **λογος**, was God.
    - a. It is interesting that the first time he uses “God” it is with the definite article, and the second time it is without the definite article.
    - b. “The word was with **the God**, and **God** was the Word.”
    - c. This introduces John’s doctrine of the incarnation.
    - d. Paul affirms the incarnation in Col. 2:15-16 in different language, but arrives at the same destination. See also Phil. 2:5-11.
- B. **Λογος** (*logos*). This was a philosophical word in the Greek world, with a background among the Platonists and the Stoics. In Alexandria, Egypt Philo was the key figure in philosophical Jewish thought.
  1. This is the Greek word for “word.”
    - a. Greek philosophy connected this word to audible utterances (words) and the source of those utterances.
    - b. The power of words was given a high place in Greek philosophy and in Judaism (Old Testament) as well.
  2. The Old Testament idea:
    - a. Gen. 1:1ff. God spoke the words and the worlds came into existence.
    - b. Ps. 33:6. “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.”
    - c. Heb. 1:-3. He spoke to the fathers, he has spoken through his Son, and he upholds everything by his powerful word.
  3. Greek philosophy.
    - a. The Stoic philosophers looked on the word **λογος** (*logos*) as the rational principal on which all things existed.
    - b. Since words originate in the mind, the Greeks looked to the mind for the ultimate reality, and connected this word **λογος** (*logos*) as a sort of bridge



between ultimate divinity (a god of some sort) and mankind, forming a sort of human-divine relationship.

- c. Plato, who lived about 428-337 B.C., entertained the thought of an ideal or perfect model of everything, and each material thing is designed after the ideal.

- 1) There was supposedly an “ideal” horse from which the gods designed all horses.
  - 2) The same was true of everything that exists in the world.

- d. Plato moved this thought into the abstract world of ideas such as justice, mercy, forgiveness, etc. This then was a “universal form,” of these principles, and everything dealing with these principles was designed according to its ultimate “form.”
- e. By the first century A.D., the Platonists believed in the existence of a mind that was superior to human mind, and was eternal. This was the “form” or the ultimate reality.
- f. It must be remembered though that Greek philosophy of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. had lost a great deal of its influence by the time of Christ because it was completely theoretical, and gave no ultimate answers to life.

- 4. Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, (20 B.C.-A.D.50) was contemporary with Jesus and Paul, but he died about 40 years before John wrote his Gospel.

- a. Philo seems to have tried to combine Greek thought with Jewish thought, but, did not give a very clear definition of it.
  - b. He tried to take the idea of **λογος** as it related to mind and intellect, and attach it to the Hebrew concept of God rather than the pagan concept of the gods.
  - c. Philo, of course, never connected this concept to the incarnation, or apply it to Jesus Christ.

- C. How does John view the **λογος**? The application of **λογος** to Christ does not occur except here in Jn. 1:1-18, in I Jn. 1:1, and in Rev. 19:13. It is never used as a title such as the word “Christ.”

- 1. John, more or less says, “Both Plato and Philo are on the right track, but they haven’t followed the track far enough. All of this comes together perfectly in Christ – the “Word” **λογος** which has become flesh.” Thus we have the incarnation. See also Isaiah 9:1-7.
  - 2. While the Greek philosophers would have seen **λογος** as applying to every man, John shows that it is uniquely seen in Jesus, the man who was divine, and who was with God in the beginning. Furthermore it was through him that everything was created.

3. The famous Christian apologist, Justin Martyr (A.D.100-165) was born to pagan parents in Nablus, West Bank (Palestine).
    - a. He studied Plato and the Stoics, but never found them to offer a satisfactory explanation of true reality. In these philosophies he could never find an adequate ultimate answer.
    - b. When he went to Ephesus (which, by the way, had been John's home in his later years), he studied various aspects of Christianity, and was faced with John 1:1-18. He concluded that John's treatment of **λογος** was the explanation he had been missing in his study of Greek philosophy. He became a Christian, and a Christian apologist, believing that Christ was the true **λογος**.
- D. "He (the **λογος**) was with God in the beginning."
- a. There is a contrast between the eternity of the **λογος** and the time limitation on the things that were made. This will be seen in vs. 2.
  - b. This is a reiteration of the statement made in the beginning of the verse.
- II. John 1:3-5. The creative "Word." "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."
- A. Vs. 3. This literally says that all things "Came into being through him."
1. The word-power of God in creation was a cardinal doctrine among the Jews.
  2. First John states these things positively and then negatively. This is a characteristic of John's writing, *e.g.* Jn. 1:8-9.
- B. Vs. 4-5. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men."
1. This will be a basic theme which John will pursue throughout the entire book. Light is frequently used in the Old Testament and in the Greek religions to describe spiritual illumination.
  2. The light shines (**φαινει** – *fainei*), present tense (linear action) = "continually shines" in the darkness, but the darkness does not understand it. The word "understand" is from the Greek word **καταλαμβάνω** (*katalambanō*), aorist tense = punctiliar action), meaning to grab, hold, overcome, possess, understand, or comprehend. John says that Christ's light *continues* to shine (linear action) in the darkness, but the darkness did not grab it, possess it, overcome it, or understand it (punctiliar action).
  3. This is shown as a moral kind of light. John frequently uses this word to speak of spiritual illumination compared to darkness, signifying ignorance of God. Philosophy and Greek religions used some of these same contrasts. One of the Dead Sea Scrolls is entitled, "The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness."

4. John frequently uses contrasts in his writings: light vs. darkness, life vs. death, good vs. evil, etc.

### III. John 1:6-8. An explanation concerning John the Baptist.

#### A. John the Baptist was a messenger from God.

1. This is the first historical fact that John mentions. Verses 1-5 have laid the groundwork for the rest of the book. Notice also that the Apostle John explains in both positive and negative terms, the mission of John the Baptist.
2. John the Baptist came as a witness of the light, but he himself was not the light.

#### B. Vs. 7. Here we have the introduction of two of John's favorite words, "believe," (*πιστευω pisteuō*) and "witness" (*μαρτυρια marturia*) which can also be translated "martyr."

1. John uses the word *πιστευω (pisteuō)* about 100 times in the Gospel. This is about nine times as much as in all three of the Synoptics combined. Although the noun form of the word, *πιστις (pistis)*, is used frequently in the Synoptics, John always uses the verb form and active voice.
  - a. Notice that the Greek does not have two different words for the English words "faith" and "belief" as is popular with some people today.
  - b. John will attach this word to the idea of accepting (believing) the testimony of John the Baptist as well as accepting the testimony of the signs Jesus will perform. These will point to his claims of Messiahship.
2. Later, in 1:19-20 John's altercation with the priests and Levites is different from that which is recorded by the Synoptics.

### IV. The *λογος (logos)* and the world.

#### A. The *κοσμος, (kosmos – world)* was made through him.

1. Compare this with Col. 1:15-16 where Paul affirms the same thing.
2. Compare this with Heb. 1:1-3.
  - a. Notice that in John, Colossians, and Hebrews the writers affirm the pre-existence of the Son and the creative activity of the Son.
  - b. Each of these writers also affirms, directly or indirectly the position of the Son in reference to his mission. Note John 1:14 and comments below.

#### B. The world, though made by him, did not recognize him.

1. The book of Enoch, probably written in the second century B.C., has in its parables, an interesting passage in which the word **λογος** is used frequently, and translated as “wisdom.” This is one meaning of the word.

Wisdom (**λογος**) found no place where she might dwell;  
Then a dwelling-place was assigned her in the heavens.  
Wisdom (**λογος**) went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men,  
And found no dwelling-place:  
Wisdom (**λογος**) returned to her place,  
And took her seat among the angels.  
*Enoch* 42:1

2. John seems to make use of these types of thoughts to lay his foundation for the true meaning of the eternal **λογος**. In John, this word is not just a philosophical concept, but is personified in Jesus.
  - a. “As many as received him to them he gave the right to become the children of God.”
  - b. “Right” is from the word **εξουσια** (*exusia*) meaning authority or power. “These are authorized to become the children of God.”
  - c. Notice that he did not say that those who received him “were,” or “had become,” the children of God, but they had the right to become the children of God.
  - d. His explanation of this is that the right to become God’s children belongs “to those who believe in his name.”

#### V. 1:14. “The Word became flesh.”

##### A. This is the climax of the Prologue.

1. This is taught by Paul and others as well. See Rom 1:3-4, Gal. 4:4, and Phi. 2:5-11.
2. In this, John ties the philosophical concept of the **λογος** to the historical Jesus.
  - a. Instead of being an intangible concept such as “wisdom,” the **λογος** is, in fact, the person of Jesus Christ.
  - b. In this, Justin Martyr saw the compatibility of philosophy and Jesus Christ.

##### B. The Gnostics/Docetics.

1. By the time John wrote (A.D. 90), Docetism was becoming a problem, and there can be little doubt that he had some of this in mind in writing this statement. See also I John. 4:2.

2. Throughout the Gospel, John will emphasize the humanity of Jesus as well as his divinity. In this Gospel Jesus is represented as being tired and thirsty (4:6-7), emotional (11:35), troubled (12:27, 13:21).
3. The word flesh refers to the fact that he became an ordinary human being just as anyone else.

C. “He made his dwelling among us.”

1. The word translated “dwelling” also means a “tent.” He pitched his tent in our midst.
2. It is from the same word translated “tabernacle.”

D. Compare John 1:1-2, 14 with Phil. 2:5-11.

1. Paul expresses some of the same ideas as John expresses in his prologue, but Paul approaches them from a different perspective.
2. We cannot fully comprehend the ramifications of these passages because they deal with infinite ideas.
  - a. Both affirm the eternal existence of Christ.
  - b. Both speak of his equality with God.
  - c. Both affirm his condescension to become human.
  - d. Paul alone speaks of his exaltation.
  - e. John alone speaks of his power to give human beings the right to become the children of God.
3. Phil. 2:6. “Being in very nature God.”
  - a. Greek word **μορφή** (*morphē*), translated “very nature” means the basic essence of one’s being. We don’t have an exact equivalent word in English. It does not deal simply with the shape or appearance, but the basic inward form.
  - b. The same word is used when he speaks of Jesus taking the form **μορφή** (form) of a servant.
4. The word servant is **δουλος** (*doulos*) meaning a slave, not just an ordinary hired servant. A hired servant would be **διακονος** (*diakonos*).
5. Furthermore, he appeared (**σχημα** – *schēma*) referring to the outward appearance or outward form.
  - a. Jesus was in essence God, but took the essence of man, and became a slave.
  - b. People saw him this way.

6. He emptied himself. The word for “he emptied” is aorist of **κενῶω** (*kenōō*) meaning to empty completely, to pour something out and have nothing left, to completely deprive of content.
    - a. He emptied himself of his equality with God, of his essence as God, yet he was still the Son of God. We have no way of understanding this.
    - b. He actually, in every way, became like you and me, with all of our weaknesses, our temptations, and desires, yet maintained his divinity as the Son of God. See Heb. 2:17-18 and Heb. 4:15.
  7. When we see the depth of Christology and theology in these two passages, we can begin to appreciate the depth of God’s love for us.
- E. John 1:14-18. Jesus is the one and only begotten of God. John uses the word **μονογενής** (*monogenēs*) showing that Jesus is the only one like this one; that is, he is the unique, only begotten one of God.
1. In 1:14 John affirms that “The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” That is, Jesus Christ is unique, in that he is “the only begotten from the Father,” **μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός** (*monogenous para patros*) who became flesh. Compare this with his statement in 1:18 where John says, “but God, the One and Only” **μονογενὴς θεός** who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” Jesus made God known to mankind as God had never been known before.
  2. The same expression is used in John 3:16 translated “only begotten” Son.

#### Conclusion:

1. By studying the prologue in detail, we can come to a better understanding of what John is going to try to accomplish in his Gospel.
2. Basically, John says, “This is the person I am going to tell you about. Know first, that he is the incarnate Son of God. Then you will understand his life and mission more completely.”

**Chapter IV**  
**Luke's Prologue**  
**Luke 1:1-4**

I. Luke as an author.

A. Discussion questions:

1. Read Luke 1:1-4.
2. Why is Luke writing his Gospel? What is his purpose?
3. To whom is he writing?
4. Where did Luke get his information?

B. He wrote both the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

1. These are two volumes of a single work, and this prologue serves as an introduction to both. See Acts 1:1-3 and compare the introductory statements.
2. His style is more classical than most of the books of the New Testament, and demonstrate excellent Greek tradition and language.
3. He was the only Gentile writer of any part of the New Testament.
4. He addressed his Gospel to Theophilus, probably a government official of high rank since Luke addressed him as “most excellent Theophilus.”
5. He was a companion of Paul, and joined him during portions of Paul's mission journey.
6. Paul refers to him in Col. 4:14 as a physician and dear friend.

II. The composition of Luke's Gospel.

A. Methods of research.

1. He opens his work by stating that there were many other accounts of the life of Jesus in circulation. He wrote so that Theophilus “might know the certainty of the things you have been taught.” Lk. 1:4.
2. Luke says that the things he wrote about were those things he got from eyewitnesses of the events surrounding the life of Jesus.
  - a. Some of the accounts which were apparently circulating during Luke's lifetime may have been inaccurate, although Luke does not necessarily imply this other than the fact that he writes that Theophilus “might know the certainty of the things you have been taught.
  - b. In Lk. 1:1-3 he speaks of “the things that have been fulfilled among us.” In Acts 1:1 he speaks of the “former book” which he wrote about the things Jesus “began to do and to teach.”
  - c. He further says that his investigation involved interviews with some of the eyewitnesses, and went back to the very beginning.

- d. This shows Luke's use of sources in composing his Gospel. Since he was not Jewish, there is no reason to suppose that he ever knew Jesus.
  - 3. In revealing himself to mankind, God used the natural abilities and opportunities of men to accomplish his purposes.
- B. Luke's purpose for writing was to assure Theophilus that he had an orderly and accurate account of the events of Jesus life.
  - 1. This would give Theophilus personal certainty concerning the things he had been taught.
  - 2. Acts continues this theme, picking up where the Gospel of Luke leaves off.
  - 3. Luke is the only author who dates the events he is reporting.
    - a. This is done concerning the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.
    - b. He again dates the events at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.
    - c. Note Acts 18:2 where Luke speaks of the edict of Claudius, the Roman emperor, when he ordered the Jews to leave Rome. This would help to date the events of Acts 18 by looking into history to see when this edict was executed by Claudius.

### III. The content of the gospel.

- A. Its uniqueness among the synoptics.
  - 1. He seems to have a love for poetry. He is the only writer who records the songs of Zachariah, and Mary, and records shorter poetic expressions of Simeon and the angels at the birth of Jesus.
  - 2. He speaks frequently of the roles that various women had in the life of Jesus. Among them are Mary (the mother of Jesus), Anna, the widow of Nain, Mary Magdala, Mary and Martha (sisters of Lazarus).
  - 3. He, more than any of the other Gospel writers, speaks of the poor and neglected people.
  - 4. There is a stronger note of universality in Luke than in the other Gospels. He gives the parable of the Good Samaritan, speaks of the Perean ministry of Jesus, and the mission of the seventy to all the cities which Jesus would later visit.



## **Chapter V**

### **Births of John the Baptist and Jesus**

#### **I. The promise of John's birth. Luke is the only writer who gives this information. Luke 1:5-25.**

##### **A. The time identified.**

1. During the days of Herod the King of Judea.
2. See notes concerning Herod in the section on the Intertestamental Period.

##### **B. Background of the announcement to Zechariah.**

1. Zechariah was a priest of the division of Abijah, and his division had been called to officiate at this time. He was assigned to burn the incense, a work of considerable honor.
2. Note the origin of the Aaronic priesthood.
3. Customarily, people stood outside the temple praying while the incense was being offered inside. This is what took place here.
4. There had long been 24 divisions of the priests, each officiating once every two years.
5. They were childless, and Elizabeth was past child-bearing years.

##### **C. Appearance of the angel.**

1. He said, "Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John."
2. It was customary for the priest to offer prayers for the people as he offered the incense
3. Vs. 17. He was to go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah. See Mal. 4:5-6. Emphasis is placed on the fact that he would be a messenger for God.
4. Zechariah's doubt was answered by Gabriel stating that he would not be able to speak until this had been accomplished.
5. John was to be the instrument of turning the hearts of the Israelites back to God, and preparing the people for the Lord.

##### **D. Upon exiting the temple, the priest ordinarily came out and pronounced a blessing on the people.**

1. Zechariah was unable to speak, and could not do this.
2. He was late in coming out, and when he did not speak the people believed he might have seen a vision.

#### **II. The announcement to Mary. Luke 1:26-39**

A. Mary and Joseph.

1. They were betrothed.
  - a. This was much more than an engagement, it had legal standing.
  - b. If the “husband” died during the period of the betrothal, the wife was considered a widow.
2. To dissolve a betrothal there had to be a divorce procedure.

B. The announcement.

1. “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.” 1:31
2. Description of the person and mission of her son.
  - a. “He will be called the Son of the Most High.” Vs. 32
  - b. He will occupy the throne of his father David.
    - 1) David was the most illustrious king of Israel.
    - 2) Prophecies had pointed to the Messiah being the son of David, and occupying his throne. See Is. 9:2-7.
    - 3) His kingdom will never end. See Daniel 2:44
3. Mary’s questions.
  - a. “How can this be since I am a virgin?”
  - b. The doctrine of the virgin birth is a Biblical doctrine, and is different from the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. That officially came into Catholicism in 1854 when Pope Pius IX pronounced it a dogma. It was entertained as early as the thirteenth century however.
  - c. “So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”
    - 1) Although Jesus does not frequently proclaim himself to be the Son of God, he affirmed it when challenged by the High Priest during his trial and he blessed Peter for stating it. See Matt. 16:16-17 (“You are the Christ, the Son of God”) and Matt. 26:63-64, (“Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” The answer was, “You say so”). In Greek this is an affirmation like, “It is as you say.”
    - 2) This was not an answer which states, “I didn’t say it; you are the one who said it.”
4. Questions.
  - a. What problems would her pregnancy have presented to Mary with reference to her family? Her community? Joseph?

- b. How would her contemporaries in Nazareth viewed her and her son?
- c. How would you have reacted if your future wife told you she was pregnant by “the Holy Spirit”?

C. Joseph’s discoveries and the announcement to him.

**Matt. 1:18-24**

1. He found out that Mary was pregnant, and had to decide what to do.
  - a. He could bring her before a public court and divorce her.
  - b. He could divorce her privately by giving her a notice of divorcement in the presence of two witnesses.
2. No doubt Mary had discussed this with Joseph, and tried to convince him of her fidelity (Mary may have said, “Joseph, I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that I’m pregnant. The good news is the father of my child is the Holy Spirit.” How might Joseph have reacted to this?
  - a. Joseph apparently refused to believe her story until the angel appeared to him in a dream assuring him that Mary’s pregnancy was indeed from God, not a human being.
  - b. Matthew says this was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, Is. 7:14.

III. The birth of John the Baptist.

**Luke 1:57-66**

A. The birth and surrounding events.

1. On the eighth day they prepared for the circumcision and naming the child.
2. They were going to name Zechariah “Jr.,” but Zechariah said, “No. He is to be called John.”
3. At this time he was again able to speak

B. The song of Zechariah. Lk. 1:67-79.

IV. The birth of Jesus.

A. Luke’s account.

1. He dates the event as was customary among in secular history.
2. Caesar Augustus ruled from 27 B.C. until A.D. 14. An enrollment for tax purposes took place for Syria in about 7 B.C. Palestine could well have come under that enrollment directive. Quiranius was governor of Syria at that time just as Luke describes it. There are some chronological difficulties here which are inexplicable.

3. There is nothing in the account of the birth that sounds like embellishments as are found frequently in mythological miraculous birth myths.
4. The visit of the shepherds.
  - a. They were in a nearby field keeping their sheep at night.
  - b. An angel appeared, made the announcement, and was then joined by the heavenly host singing.
  - c. They decided to go to Bethlehem to find him. He would be lying in a manger.

B. Matthew's account.

**Matt. 2:1:12**

1. Matthew says nothing of the taxation enrollment, but places Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem rather than Nazareth.
2. The visit of the Magi.
  - a. The Magi were probably Parthian or Median astrologers or stargazers, and are thought by some to have been Zoroastrian priests. Some believe these were Babylonian astrologers.
  - b. Zoroastrians looked for a victor to come to the world who would bring light in place of darkness. This was a religion begun by Zoroaster (630 – 550 B.C. It was monotheistic, worshipping Ahura Mazda, the god of wisdom and light.
  - c. Also, the Roman writer Suetonius (70 – 130 A.D.), speaking of the birth of Vespasian just 10-15 years after the birth of Jesus says at that time, “An ancient and persistent idea was circulated throughout the whole East that it was fated at that time the rulers of the world would arise from Judea.” See Jack Finnegan, *Jesus, History, and You*, p. 22.
3. He identifies Herod as king at that time, stating that Magi were seeking him and went to Herod for guidance. They had seen his star in the east.
  - a. Various attempts have been made to identify the star. Saturn and Jupiter were in conjunction three times during 7 B.C., but there is no indication that this is what Matthew had reference to.
  - b. The news of this birth disturbed Herod and the people of Jerusalem.
  - c. Herod knew nothing of this, but called the chief priests and scribes together to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born.
  - d. The priests referred to Micah 5:2 to establish that Bethlehem was the expected place of the Messiah's birth. The Magi followed the star to Bethlehem, and gave their gifts.
  - e. The visit of the Magi was not immediately after the birth of Jesus. Note Matt. 2:13-18.
4. Joseph took the family to Egypt, and remained there until Herod's death in 4 B.C., after which they returned to Nazareth.

5. Herod had the male children in and around Bethlehem killed, “who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.” 2:16.
  - a. This kind of action fits well into the characteristic behavior of Herod as we know it.
  - b. He had some member of his own family killed (wife and son) because he suspected them of treason. See the lesson on the Intertestamental Period.
  - c. The saying arose which was a play on words, that it was better to be Herod’s pig (ὄζ) than his son (ὁἰός).
6. Archelaus, Herod’s son and successor, was brutal as his father was, and he lasted only a short time as king (Ethnarch). He was removed and banished in A.D. 6, after which Palestine was governed by a procurator for the most part.

Conclusion:

1. Note the differences between Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus and that of Matthew.
2. In giving the genealogy, Matthew begins with Abraham, but Luke goes all the way back to “Adam the son of God.” See Luke 3:23-37. Can you think of a reason why these differences occur?

## Chapter VI

### The Baptism and Temptations of Jesus

#### I. The ministry of John the Baptist.

**Matt. 3:1-12**

**Mark 1:1-8**

**Luke 3:1-20**

**John 1:19-28**

##### A. Read the four accounts, and note the differences.

1. Mark's is the shortest and Luke's is the longest.
2. John seems to differ from the others to the greatest extent by including some material not mentioned by the others.
3. Luke's account differs from Matthew and Mark by giving information on John the Baptist's reply to some people who came out to his baptism.
  - a. Luke dates these events. Tiberius Caesar reigned from A.D. 14 until 37. John's ministry and baptism of Jesus was in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius.
  - b. Luke tells us that Jesus was about 30 years old at that time. See Lk. 3:23.

##### B. John's message.

1. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This was John's announcement of the coming kingdom.
2. All three synoptic accounts emphasize John's message of repentance and baptism.
3. He was seen as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, Is. 40:1-5.
4. He referred to those who came out as "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"
  - a. "One is coming after me who is mightier than I."
  - b. Matthew said that when John saw many of the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming out to his baptism he challenged them to show their repentance by reforming their lives. This would have been thought of as an insult to them since they were the religious leaders of their day, and the chosen nation of Israel.
  - c. He denounced their total reliance on Abraham as their father.
  - d. The fact that John required baptism of the Jews (a rite of purification with which the Jews were familiar), seemed to say to them that their pedigree (Abraham as their father) did not give them privilege with God.
5. The disciples of John the Baptist continued long after his death. They are found in Acts 19 in the city of Ephesus in about the year A.D. 55.

#### II. The baptism of Jesus. This marks the beginning of Jesus' three year public ministry.

**Matt. 3:13-17**

**Mark 1:9-11**

**Luke 3:21-22**

A. Matthew gives the most detailed account of this.

1. Matthew states that Jesus came down from Galilee to be baptized.
2. John tried to deter Jesus from this.
3. Jesus was baptized “to fulfill all righteousness.” This seems to be a reference to Jesus’ mission to do the complete will of God. Why are we told to be baptized? Acts 2:38
4. Only John uses the expression, “Lamb of God.” See Jn. 1:29, 36

B. The descent of the dove, and voice from heaven.

1. The Spirit “descended like a dove,” (Matthew and Mark). Luke says he was praying, and the Spirit “descended on him in bodily form like a dove.
2. A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

### III. The Temptations.

**Matt. 4:1-11      Luke 4:1-13**

A. The situation.

1. Jesus had gone to the desert and fasted 40 days.
2. This is immediately after his baptism, and before beginning his public ministry.
3. Heb. 4:15. He was “tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin.” What is temptation?

B. The first temptation: Changing the stones into bread.

1. The challenge is, “If you are the Son of God.”
2. He is challenged to use his divine power for personal comfort. That was not the design of his power.
3. He is shown in the Gospels and other parts of the New Testament to be as human as we are. Such use of his power would have voided that claim.
4. The temptation was met by a quotation from Deut. 8:3.

C. The second temptation: To throw himself down from the highest point of the temple.

1. Again the challenge, “If you are the Son of God.”
2. The Devil quoted the Old Testament stating that God would not allow him to harm himself, but would bear him up in trouble. Ps. 91:11-12
3. Again Jesus used an Old Testament quotation from Deut. 6:16

D. The third temptation: To receive the all of the kingdoms of the world if he would bow down and worship the Devil.

1. There is no challenge, “If you are the Son of God,” but just the challenge of political power in exchange for homage paid to the Devil by Christ.
2. Again Jesus answered with Scripture, Deut. 6:13
3. The Devil leaves him at this time.

#### IV. What is the meaning of these temptations as they relate to Jesus’ mission and work?

##### A. What was Jesus facing?

1. The beginning of his mission.
  - a. How would he accomplish this mission?
  - b. What kind of Messiah would he be?
  - c. What kind of king would he be?
  - d. How could he win the hearts of his countrymen?
  - e. What contradictions would he face?
2. Jesus had to face these things before he could plan his mission effectively.

##### B. Some options which the temptations presented.

1. The first temptation: changing the stones into bread.
  - a. Remember, Jesus was very hungry, having fasted for 40 days.
  - b. Would he be a Messiah who provided for the primary physical needs of all human beings?
  - c. By being a “bread Messiah” he would gain the allegiance of the masses, the poor, and deprived. The Romans had been ruthless in their taxation of the provinces. This would have gained for him an immediate following.
  - d. Later in his ministry (John 6) we see that the Jews expected the Messiah to provide the people with “bread” (food) just as Moses had provided the Israelites with manna in the wilderness at the time of the exodus.
  - e. This would have given him many advantages, and would probably have made him a popular figure in Israel.
  - f. Notice the challenge, “If you are the Son of God.” Becoming a “bread Messiah” would have easily transformed itself into testimony that he was the Son of God.
  - g. This would have been good, but would not have been the highest good.
  - h. This would have left unanswered the real challenge of his mission, to seek and save the lost, and give his life as a ransom for many, and to do the will of the Father. He faced the question, “Is this the way that the people will find God?”
2. The second temptation: throwing himself down from the highest point of the temple.



- a. This would have been spectacular, attracting attention as he floated down to earth unharmed.
  - b. Would he be a “spectacular Messiah” making a display of his power for the purpose of attracting public acceptance? He could have taken all sorts of impossible chances always to be rescued by God so that no harm would come to him?
  - c. This also would probably have gained him a considerable following. People of that day, just like people today tend to be attracted to spectacular events.
  - d. The Devil reminded him that the Old Testament assured his safety.
  - e. The challenge again is, “Is this the way for the nation to find God?”
3. The third temptation: “All of the nations of the world will be yours if you will worship me.”
- a. The Devil “possessed” those nations, and offered to deliver them to Jesus.
  - b. After all, didn’t Christ really come in order to save the world?
  - c. Would Jesus be a “political Messiah?”
  - d. He is here offered the spiritual/political rulership of the world. Isn’t this what he came for?
  - e. Would it not be desirable to make his people “free?” Their oppression under the Romans was deplorable. *Jesus had to own up to the fact that he did not come to end the misery of man’s slavery and bondage, but to free them from the slavery of sin.*
  - f. For generations the Jews had entertained the idea of self-rule and with some, rulership of the world, through the Messiah. They thought that he would deliver them from the bondage of Rome’s domination.
  - g. Such a Messiah would have been seen as the deliverer of Israel – the one who released them from the ruthless rule of a foreign power.
  - h. This would have been the easiest way for the Messiah to “conquer” the world. Jesus wanted to “rule the world,” but as a spiritual leader, ruling the hearts of men, not by political or military power.

#### C. The result.

1. All of these alternative methods of being a “human needs Messiah,” or a “spectacular Messiah” or a “political Messiah” were refused.
2. He chose to be a Messiah submissive to the Father, no matter the cost.
3. These temptations presented themselves in one form or another throughout Jesus’ ministry. He always opted to do God’s will, even though there were quick rewards for yielding.

**Chapter VII**  
**The First Disciples**  
**Marriage at Cana**  
**Cleansing the Temple**  
**Conversation with Nicodemus**

**I. John 1:35-51. The Lamb of God.**

**A. The origin of the expression.**

1. This seems to have originated with John the Baptist, John 1:29-36.
2. He identified Jesus as the one who “takes away the sin of the world.”
  - a. There is an emphasis here on the idea of Jesus taking sin away, not just forgiving sin.
  - b. Is. 53:7 may be the origin of this expression in Isaiah’s picture of the suffering servant.
  - c. For the Messiah to take away the sin of the world was completely foreign to Jewish thinking in the first century.

**B. The sacrificial idea.**

1. Since the Apostle John is writing in about A.D. 90, his readers would be familiar with the idea of the Messiah as the sacrificial lamb, but the Jews of Jesus’ day would not have understood this.
2. At the daily morning and evening sacrifices, the Passover, and other occasions lambs were offered in sacrifice, so the audience of John the Baptist would be familiar with the idea of such sacrifices but would not have applied this to their Messiah.

**C. John the Baptist’s observations.**

1. Notice the Baptist’s testimony that Jesus was revealed to him by the descent of the Spirit. John 1:32-34
2. A close reading of this shows that John’s Gospel is dealing with a different situation than the Synoptics.

**II. Two of John’s disciples inquired of Jesus about where he lived.**

**A. Jesus is addressed as “Rabbi” meaning teacher.**

1. Why might this be considered a strange title for Jesus?
2. Jesus was not trained as a Rabbi. Later his adversaries called attention to the fact that he had no theological training.

3. Although the term appears in Matthew and Mark, it does not appear at all in Luke. In John Jesus is referred to as Rabbi 18 times.
4. His own disciples as well as others used this term in addressing Jesus.

B. Andrew brings his brother Simon to Jesus. Others are called.

1. Jesus said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas.” This was an Aramaic or Jewish name which is translated Peter.
2. The following day Jesus found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Jesus was going to go to Galilee. Philip, Andrew, and Peter were from Bethsaida, a town in Galilee.
3. Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus. Note the interchange here. John 1:44-49.
  - a. Nathaniel was “under the fig tree” when he was approached by Philip. In Jewish tradition this was frequently a place where people would study the Torah, or Law.
  - b. Nathaniel might have been doing this when he came to Jesus.

III. **John 2:1-11.** Jesus at Cana of Galilee. Cana was a small city located near the Sea of Galilee, about 3 ½ miles northeast of Nazareth, Jesus hometown.  
John 2:1-11

A. The wedding.

1. They ran out of wine.
2. “My hour has not yet come.”
  - a. This seems to be a simple statement that Jesus made, that at the right time he would take care of things.
  - b. Jesus’ mother responded by telling the servants to do whatever Jesus said

B. The miracle.

1. Notice the explanation John gives about the six water jars, each holding over 20 gallons, according the custom of the Jews for purification.
  - a. Why would John explain this? Because he was writing to a non-Jewish audience, probably living in Ephesus, Asia Minor.
  - b. At various times John explains Jewish customs for the benefit of his original readers who probably were not familiar with the customs of the Jews or the location of specific places in Jerusalem.
2. How does this miracle fit into John’s original purpose in writing the Gospel? It is a Gospel of signs.
  - a. “The Word was God.”

- b. John is affirming throughout his Gospel that Jesus was God in the flesh.
- c. Notice John's observation at the close of the miracles.

- 1) It was the first "sign" done by Jesus.
- 2) It was a manifestation of his glory.
- 3) His disciples believed in him.

#### IV. **John 2:12-22.** Jesus returns to Jerusalem and cleanses the temple.

##### A. He returned to Jerusalem for the Passover.

- 1. The origin of the Passover. See Exodus 12
- 2. The Passover lamb and its significance.
- 3. All male Jews were to attend this feast.
- 4. The Synoptics also show Jesus cleansing the Temple near the close of his ministry.

##### B. The situation.

- 1. At the Passover each family had to have a lamb for the Passover meal, yet any came from remote parts of the empire.
- 2. Animals were sold, and currency exchanged as a business, using the temple precincts for this purpose.
- 3. It seems that there was a sort of carnival atmosphere created making the temple grounds a sort of bazaar.

##### C. What Jesus did.

- 1. He made a whip similar to those used to drive cattle.
- 2. He turned over the tables of the money changers and drove them out.

##### D. The challenge presented by the Jews.

- 1. "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"
- 2. This is similar to what happened at the close of his ministry. See Matthew 21:12-13, 23-27. His answer here however is different from his answer to the same question toward the close of his ministry.
- 3. Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."
  - a. He was referring to his body, and the resurrection. See vs. 21.
  - b. Jesus had to face this accusation at the time of his trial before the Sanhedrin, Matt. 26:61.
  - c. Notice how John links this to his overall objective of showing Jesus as the Word which became flesh.

- d. The temple had been built for the Jews by Herod, and was also referred to as Herod's temple. It had been under construction for 46 years at that time. It was finally completed in A.D. 64, but was destroyed in A.D. 70 when the Romans sacked Jerusalem.

V. **John 2:23—3:21.** Jesus and Nicodemus.

A. Jesus returned to Jerusalem.

B. Who was Nicodemus?

1. A ruler of the Jews.
  - a. A Pharisee.
  - b. A teacher (the teacher).
  - c. A member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council made up of 70 members. Nicodemus seems to have gone against the Sanhedrin in defense of Jesus in John 7:50.
2. He affirms Jesus as a messenger from God because of the signs which he did. Note how this fits into John's purpose. John mentions that Jesus performed miraculous signs at this time in Jerusalem but he does not describe them. See John 2:23-25.

C. Jesus statement to Nicodemus.

1. We do not know what (or whether) Nicodemus asked a question, or why he came at night.
2. Jesus states that the new birth is a condition of entering the kingdom of God. Literally this should be translated, "born from above."
  - a. Jewish expectation of the kingdom of God.
  - b. Note also the Jewish Messianic expectation.
3. In John, Jesus frequently uses figures of speech and confusing statements to stimulate further questions and dialogue.
  - a. John 4. The Samaritan woman.
  - b. John 6. Living bread – eat my flesh and drink my blood.

D. The dialogue with Nicodemus.

1. "How can a man be born when he is old?"
2. To Nicodemus this seemed impossible.
3. Jesus' response. Notice that Jesus was explaining the new birth.

- a. Born of water and the Spirit.
- b. A rebirth in baptism and a renewal of one's spirit is the idea.

4. Jesus further explains it.

- a. "Flesh gives birth to flesh, and spirit gives birth to spirit."
- b. The wind blows, but you don't know where it comes from or where it goes. So is the one born of the Spirit.
- c. Note the play on words here. The word **πνευμα** (*pneuma*) is the word for wind or breath but is also the word for spirit.
- d. Ancient church writers are almost universal in affirming that this is a reference to baptism.
- e. Jesus asks, "You are Israel's teacher, and do you not understand these things." The definite article is used with "teacher." "Are you the teacher of Israel" would be a literal translation. This may indicate that Nicodemus was an especially prominent teacher.

E. Jesus' additional teaching.

- 1. Earthly and heavenly things.
- 2. "We testify to what we have seen." This may be a parenthetical statement of the writer (John) to the audience to whom he was originally writing.
- 3. In John 3:13 Jesus affirms his own preexistence. This occurs somewhat frequently in John.
  - a. Notice John's use of believe – faith.
  - b. John uses this idea more frequently than any other Gospel writer.

F. John 3:16-21. "For God so loved the world . . ."

- 1. This is an all-encompassing statement concerning God's promise of eternal life.
  - a. The Greek word **μονογενῆ** (*monogenē*) means "the only one like this." It is translated "only begotten," of "one and only" son.
  - b. The necessity of atonement, though not stated here, is implied.
- 2. In this, Jesus makes a proclamation of his mission and also his power to save.

G. Jesus states his mission.

- 1. Not to condemn, but to save.
- 2. He further states that the believer is not condemned, but the unbeliever is condemned already because he has not believed.
- 3. Jesus came to bring light, but men loved darkness.
- 4. John frequently uses contrasts.

## Chapter VIII

### Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

#### John 4:1-42

#### I. Jesus returns to Galilee.

##### A. John the Baptist and Jesus.

1. The Pharisees heard that Jesus popularity was surpassing that of John the Baptist.
2. Probably the claims Jesus made for himself were perceived by the Pharisees as a threat to their position.

##### B. He had to pass through Samaria.

1. Bitter rivalry between Jews and Samaritans.
2. A passage in the Jewish Mishnah says, "He who eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one who eats pork." (*Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7, p. 365)
3. Review history of the settlement of Samaria.
4. An alternate route through Perea was taken by most Jews traveling between Judea (south) and Galilee (north) to keep from having to go through Samaria.

#### II. Jacob's well.

##### A. Located near Sychar.

1. This is probably the modern village of Askar, located between Mt. Ebal (the mount of cursing) and Mt. Gerizim (the mount of blessing). See Deut. 11:26-29)
2. This is one of the few locations in the Holy Land which is reasonably certain.
3. The disciples went into the city to buy food. It was about noon (sixth hour).

##### B. The beginning of the encounter with the Samaritan woman.

1. The woman came to the well to draw water, and Jesus asked for a drink.
  - a. As a traveler, he would not have had container or rope, and the well was about 100 feet deep.
  - b. Because of Jesus' Galilean accent (it was peculiar), or his dress perhaps the woman recognized him as Jew rather than a Samaritan, and she was surprised that he would speak to her. This encounter took place about noon, the 6<sup>th</sup> hour of the day.
  - c. Notice John's explanation; "For the Jews do not associate with Samaritans." Vs. 9. Once again we see how John pauses to explain some things to his readers which he knows they will not be familiar with.

2. Jesus uses the same pattern of speech in chapters 3 (with Nicodemus speaking of the new birth), chapter 4 (here with the Samaritan woman) and chapter 6 (with the multitude about the bread of life).
  - a. In response to a question, Jesus makes a profound, but puzzling statement. This seems to be done on purpose in order to stimulate conversation.
  - b. When the other party expresses confusion Jesus gives a partial answer to clarify the obvious confusion, but the answer is not complete.
  - c. When confusion still remains, Jesus finally explains his spiritual idea. (New birth, water of life, living water, bread of life, etc.)
3. Notice how Jesus applies this method here.
  - a. “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” Vs. 10
  - b. The expression living water was used by the Jews to describe flowing water like a brook or bubbling spring compared to the well where it is necessary to draw the water out.
  - c. When the woman expressed confusion, “you have nothing to draw with,” Jesus gave a partial explanation. “Whoever drinks of the water I give will never thirst . . . the water I give him will become a spring of water. . .” vs. 14. Notice that the answer is not complete.
  - d. When she asks for this water so that she will not have to come draw water, Jesus moves the conversation in his own desired direction.
4. In ancient Middle Eastern thought, water often symbolized divine wisdom, and salvation. See Is. 12:3: “With joy you shall draw water out of the wells of salvation.”
  - a. The Old Testament speaks of God himself being the fountain of living waters. Jer. 2:13.
  - b. In Revelation, the river of the water of life flows out of the throne of God.
  - c. Jesus’ statement here aligns him with the Old Testament prophets and those who spoke for God.
5. Later, (7:39) the idea of living water is expressed as the Spirit of God living in the followers of Jesus.
6. Vs. 14, “It shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life.”
  - a. This confused the woman.
  - b. She still did not understand the symbolism.
  - c. Jesus says the spring of water of which he was speaking will well up into eternal life.
  - d. Notice that the idea of eternal life is frequently found in John. He uses it 16 times, whereas the synoptics all together use it only 9 times.



7. The woman replied that she would like to have this water so she wouldn't have to come so far to draw water.
- C. Jesus asked her to go get her husband.
1. The woman changes the subject.
    - a. First she replied that she had no husband, and Jesus responded, "The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." Vs. 18.
    - b. Notice how this power of Jesus to know the woman's history tacitly supports John's purpose in writing this Gospel of signs.
    - c. Jesus uses this transition to advantage.
    - d. She attempted to change the subject by saying that she saw that Jesus was a prophet.
  2. She therefore brings up a theological question concerning where people ought to worship.
    - a. The Samaritan temple had been located on Mt. Gerizim, right in plain view, but the Jews contended that only in Jerusalem was the temple to be located. This was a hot issue between the Jews and Samaritans.
    - b. After the return from the Babylonian Exile the Samaritans split with the Jews, and they erected a temple of their own at Mt. Gerizim about 400 B.C. It was destroyed by John Hyrcanus about 129 B.C.
  3. The Samaritans did not recognize any of the Old Testament Scripture beyond the Pentateuch.

### III. Jesus and true worship.

- A. Jesus' statements about true worship and the woman's response.
1. "We worship what we know; you worship what you do not know."
    - a. This was an accusation that the Samaritans did not truly know God, for they rejected all other writings except the Pentateuch.
    - b. "Salvation is from the Jews." That is, the Messiah is to come from the Jews.
  2. The time will come when the location of worship is not the test. Vs. 21.
  3. True worship will depend on spirit and truth, not location. Vs. 24.
    - a. Note that Jesus prefaces this statement by affirming "God is a Spirit."
    - b. This is the reason that we must worship him from within our own spirits, not just with form, ritual, or ceremony.

4. She said she knew the Messiah (Christ) would come and explain everything. We do not know anything about the nature of the Samaritan Messianic hope.
    - a. Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am he." Here Jesus affirms his own Messiahship.
    - b. What might have gone through the woman's mind at this time?
  5. The woman goes into the city to tell others that she had found the Christ. Note their response.
- B. The dialogue between Jesus and the disciples.
1. The disciples were surprised that Jesus was speaking to the woman. This was probably not just because she was a Samaritan, but there was a rabbinical saying, "A man should hold no conversation with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife, still less with any other woman, lest men should gossip." (Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrasch*, II, 438. Quoted in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8, pp. 529-530.)
  2. Notice Jesus' statement concerning his food. In this he is probably referring to the fact that his real nourishment (food) is not physical but spiritual. That is, to do the will of the Father.
  3. This is followed up by his statement concerning the harvest. See verse 35. In Matt. 9:35-38 Jesus uses the same metaphor, but adds that they should pray that the Lord would send out workers into his harvest.
  4. Approximately 3 years later, after the death and resurrection, Philip (not the apostle) left Jerusalem to take the gospel to Samaria. See Acts 8:4-25. We might wonder if any of the people in Sychar, the city where Jesus met the woman, might have heard Philip at that time.

## **Chapter IX**

### **Healings and Clashes With Religious Authorities**

#### Introduction:

1. The scene changes from the Galilee to Jerusalem.
2. Jesus went to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews, but there is no indication of which Jewish feast this was.

#### I. The pool of Bethesda.

##### **John 5:1-15**

##### A. Its description.

1. Note that John locates and describes the pool for those not familiar with Jerusalem.
2. The Pool of Bethesda is one of the few Biblical sites in Jerusalem which can be identified with a high degree of probability. Archaeological excavations and the descriptions given by Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived during the first century. The pool is located just north of the temple mound, close to the present day church of St. Anne.
3. It covered a wide area, about 300 X 150 feet (91m x 46m), and was divided into two sections. Each section had two porches with a single porch dividing them.
4. Its architecture suggests that it was probably built during the reign of Herod the Great.
5. Some people of Jesus' day that the waters had healing properties for the infirmed, and it became a popular place for them to come.

##### B. The troubling of the waters.

1. Most scholars believe there was a Jewish superstition that when the waters were stirred up or bubbled the first person in the pool would be healed of his malady.
2. Notice also the answer that the man gave to Jesus in vs. 7.

#### II. The healing the lame man.

##### A. The miracle.

1. Jesus asked him if he wanted to be healed.
2. Jesus then told him to pick up his pallet and walk.

##### B. This was a healing on the Sabbath.

1. The Jewish authorities who questioned Jesus about the healing appeared not to be interested in the fact of the man's healing, but only that there had been, in their opinion, a violation of the Sabbath.
2. Jewish traditions concerning the Sabbath. The Old Testament law prohibited work on the Sabbath, but no definition was given concerning just what the word "work" might include. Traditions had arisen which was later referred to as Rabbinical law. The ancient rabbis thought it was necessary for them to give lengthy descriptions and definitions of exactly what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. These traditions were given the force of religious law, although there was no Old Testament authority for them. Jesus frequently clashed with the Pharisees concerning the traditions because they had come to be more important to them than the Law itself. Concerning the strict observance of the Sabbath, the rabbinic tradition said, "If any one carries anything from a public place to a private house on the Sabbath . . . intentionally, he is punished by cutting off and stoning." (death) See J.H. Bernard, *I.C.C.* Vol. I, pp.232-233.
3. The Jewish authorities rebuked the man for carrying his pallet on the Sabbath. He referred them to Jesus, but he didn't know his name or who he was.
4. Definitions of "work."
  - a. In this Jesus teaches the value of humanity VS. the letter of the Law.
  - b. In the Mishnah there is a list of 39 things which constitute "work," and therefore forbidden on the Sabbath. It was all right to carry a couch with a sick person on it, but not all right to carry a couch without a person on it. The rationale for this was that the couch is the man's means of conveyance, and is therefore secondary.
5. Jesus finds the man in the Temple and tells him to "sin no more."
6. Notice vs. 16-18 where John explains that the Jews persecuted Jesus because they perceived him as a Sabbath breaker. This became a major issue.
  - a. The sanctity of the Sabbath and the traditions of the elders were of great importance to the Pharisees. This is the first confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees in Jerusalem, although such confrontations had previously taken place in Galilee. See Mark 3:4 and Luke 6:1 where Jesus' activity on the Sabbath is attacked.
  - b. Jesus is frequently faced with these problems in the Synoptics.
7. Verses 16-18 give another of John's insertions to further explain why the Jews persecuted Jesus. "Equal with God." Jesus claimed that God was HIS Father, not the Father of all Jewish people. This was a big problem for the Jews.

### III. Jesus uses the miracles to teach spiritual lessons.

#### **John 5:16-46**

##### A. Christological statements of Jesus.

1. What claims did Jesus make for himself?
2. “My Father is always at work . . .”
3. The Jews took exception to this because not only did he violate the Sabbath, but he also called God his own Father, “making himself equal with God.”
  - a. The Jews had no concept of the idea of the Trinity. There is no implication a trinity in the Old Testament, and to the Jews such things were blasphemy.
  - b. Jesus briefly develops the theme of his own relationship to God the Father.

B. Testimonies about Jesus. 5:31-40

1. The testimony of John the Baptist.
2. The works that he does testify that he was sent from God. (Nicodemus said, “no one could perform these miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” John 3:2.)
3. The tragedy was that the Jews saw these works, and accepted them as the miraculous signs which they were intended to be, but did not accept that to which they testified, *i.e.* the Messiahship and divinity of Jesus. See also Acts 4:16.

C. Jesus’ insight into the true nature of his adversaries.

1. “You do not have the love of God in your heart.” John 5:41
2. “I come in my Father’s name and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name you will accept him.” John 5:42
  - a. Jesus attacks their prejudice.
  - b. Faith for them is impossible because they have denied the prerequisite, *i.e.* love for God. Notice that faith is considered more than just a belief in God. It is the acceptance of the claims of Jesus.
  - c. The Jewish leaders confidently looked to the Law, which Jesus shows as their allegiance to Moses. “If you believed Moses you would have believed me because he wrote about me.” Their loyalty was not really to Moses, but to themselves. They had made their traditions more important than the Law itself.

Conclusion:

1. Notice how John intersperses his own comments and clarifications through this section.
2. Notice also how Jesus used a miracle to introduce a discourse. This is characteristic of John’s Gospel.

## Chapter X

### Rejection and Response

#### Introduction:

1. Notice that a whole group of events took place between the temptations in the wilderness and the present events in Galilee.
2. John is the only one who records those events. See the previous lessons covering John 1:35 – 4:42.

#### I. Visit to Nazareth and his first rejection.

##### **Luke 4:14-30**

#### A. Galilee was a section of Palestine located about 50 miles (80.47 km.) north of Jerusalem.

1. It stretched about 50 miles (80.47 km.) from north to south, and about 20 miles (32.19 km.) from east to west.
2. It was one of the most densely populated areas of Palestine, but the Jews had been a minority since the Assyrians, under Tiglath-Pileser (734 B.C.) began to invade the Kingdom of Israel. In 722 B.C., under Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed.
3. Galilee was, and continues to be, a very heavy farming area.
4. Galilee's first century population is thought to have been about 450,000 of which about 100,000 were Jews. The Romans occupying Galilee had a considerable number of slaves. The non-Jewish population of the area was high.
5. The synoptics show most of Jesus' ministry taking place in Galilee, but John speaks of Christ's Judean ministry as well.

#### B. The city and the area around Nazareth.

1. In Luke 2:39 Luke calls Nazareth a city (πολις) which Barclay believes indicates it was not just small village. Barclay says the population was probably as much as 20,000. Some commentators do not agree with this however, and speak of it as a small insignificant village, while others believe it might have been somewhat prominent since it was located on both the north-south and east-west trade routes.
2. It was located about 15 miles (24 km.) southwest of the Sea of Galilee.

#### C. The rise of the synagogue.

1. The first archaeological evidence comes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., but synagogues are known to have existed long before that.
  - a. They probably arose during the intertestamental period.

- b. Some believe that synagogues may have originated during the Babylonian exile, and were planted in cities of the Diaspora and in Palestine in the early post-exilic period.
  - 2. The synagogue was a place of teaching, not sacrifice. However, the absence of the temple during the exile may have been a strong contributing factor in the rise of the synagogue.
- D. The incident in the synagogue in Nazareth.
  - 1. A synagogue service usually consisted of prayers, reading of Old Testament Scriptures, teaching, and perhaps discussion
  - 2. The president of the synagogue (ruler of the synagogue) may invite anyone to speak during the teaching period. The speech was usually followed by questions and discussion.
  - 3. Up until the incident in this passage, Jesus seems to have been held in high esteem. See Luke 4:15.
  - 4. Jesus' participation.
    - a. He read from Isaiah 61:1-2. After he read he sat down. This was the customary indication that he was about to speak to the assembly.
    - b. "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 4:21.
      - 1) All spoke well of him, but this might have soon angered some, for they questioned, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"
      - 2) Jesus' reply seems to indicate that this was a question of hostility. See verses 22-23, "Physician, heal yourself."
  - 5. Jesus refers to the narrow scope of his mission by referring to two Old Testament characters, the widow in Zerephath in Elijah's day, and Naaman the leper in Elisha's day.
- E. What did Jesus declare as his mission according to these statements?
  - 1. Jesus declared his mission in this statement from Isaiah.
    - a. He is anointed from God.
    - b. He was to preach good news to the poor.
    - c. Proclaim freedom for the prisoners.
    - d. Recovery of sight to the blind.
    - e. Release for the oppressed.
    - f. Proclaim the year of the Lord's acceptance.
  - 2. The second response of the Jews.

- a. They were all angered when he spoke of Elijah and his assistance to the widow Zerephath and Elisha healing Naaman.
  - b. This is probably due to the fact that in Jesus' comments he seemed to open the door for other nationalities to come to God, not just the Jews.
  - c. They led him to the brow of the hill to throw him off, but he escaped through the crowd.
- 3. His only weapon in accomplishing his mission was love and compassion.
  - a. Note the remainder of his ministry contrasted with the Jewish Messianic expectation.
  - b. When injured or insulted, he did not retaliate.
  - c. The context of Isaiah's passage shows that he referred to those who were spiritually oppressed, and were spiritual prisoners, etc.
  - d. Jesus was not a theologian who wanted to develop a theoretical explanation for the paradoxes and problems of the nature of God etc., but a practical man who wanted to touch the lives of people, and finally offer himself as an atonement for sin.

II. The call of the fishermen. Notice how the three accounts differ.

**Matt. 4:18-22 Mark 1:14-20 Luke 5:1-11**

A. The Sea of Galilee.

- 1. It has also been called the Sea (Lake) of Chennerith, Lake of Gennesaret, and the Sea (Lake) of Tiberias (John 6:1).
- 2. It is about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide, and lies in a deep gorge about 700 feet below sea level.
- 3. Its waters come from as far north as Mt. Hermon into a marshy area called Lake Huleh.
  - a. Lake Huleh is 230 feet above sea level and the Sea of Galilee is 700 feet below sea level.
  - b. Therefore in the course of about 10 miles the water flowing into Galilee has dropped about 930 feet.
- 4. The Jordan River flows south out of the Sea of Galilee about 65 miles as the crow flies, terminating in the Dead Sea.
  - a. It actually travels almost 200 miles because of its zigzag course.
  - b. It drops about 590 feet to the lowest spot on earth, 1292 feet below sea level, but its level fluctuates reaching as much as 1355 feet below sea level. See [www.geology.com](http://www.geology.com)

B. Luke's account of the call of the disciples.



1. Jesus taught the crowd from Simon's fishing boat.
2. He asked Simon to "put out into the deep water, and led down the nets for a catch."
  - a. This would probably have been unusual since fish were usually found at night, and in the shallower water.
  - b. Peter's realization of the divine presence of Jesus made him feel unworthy to be in his company.
3. Jesus then told Peter that "from now on you will catch men."

C. The account in Matthew and Mark.

1. The Gospel writers are not so much interested in chronological order (*e.g.* a biography) as they are in the events and their significance.
2. In both Matthew and Mark the calling of the disciples comes right after the temptations in the wilderness
3. Jesus was walking by the sea and called two sets of brothers. James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and Peter and Andrew.
  - a. "Follow me." Many times teachers or rabbis would invite those who were especially interested to follow them, and become their disciples.
  - b. Remember the previous contact Jesus had with Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel in John 1:35-51.
  - c. John 1:1-2 says that Jesus' disciples attended the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee. The invitation for these men to follow Jesus was not an abrupt one.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus continued to gather his disciples until the number came to twelve.
2. In Matt. 9:9 and Mk. 4:13 we have the call of Matthew. This appears to be the last of the 12 to be called.
3. In Matthew 10, Mk. 3, and Lk. all twelve listed.

## Chapter XI

### Sermon on the Mount

#### Matthew 5

##### Introduction:

1. The setting is a mountain in Galilee.
2. “His disciples came to him and he began to teach them.” This would be the type of setting expected of a rabbi.

##### I. The Beatitudes. The foundation of righteous living. Matt. 5:3-16

###### A. The word “blessed” (μακαροί—*makaroi* = the deeply happy ones )

1. The word has a Hebrew equivalent which appears in the Greek Septuagint.
2. Both in the Septuagint and the New Testament the basic meaning is “happy” or an exclamatory expression “Oh, how fortunate is this person.” There is not an exact English equivalent.
3. Note that Jesus is using the word to describe lasting and true happiness, not that which is *temporary* or fleeting.
4. The beatitudes are filled with statements which go contrary to popular thinking. These are called paradoxes. Two examples are, “The humble shall be exalted” and “The last shall be first.” This goes contrary to the conventional wisdom of the day.

###### B. The poor in spirit.

1. This refers to the attitude (spirit) which characterizes those who are literally poor.
2. They are pictured as humble in attitude in contrast to the rich who are generally characterized as arrogant.
3. Jesus constantly exalted the characteristic of humility. The Greeks and Romans both considered this a weak personal characteristic. See also Matt. 18:1-4, 20:26—28, 23:12.

###### C. Those who mourn.

1. Those who are sympathetic to the sorrows of others, or are surrounded by sorrows of their own.
2. Think of the gospel as “good news” to these people.

###### D. The meek.

1. The word does not mean shy or timid as some suppose meekness to be.

2. The Greek word is **πραυς**, (*praus*) which means kind, gentle, non-retaliating, benevolent.
3. The Romans and Greeks also considered this to be a weak personal characteristic.

E. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

1. The word **δικαιοσύνη** (*dikaioσύνη*) may mean either righteousness or justice.
2. Here, it probably refers to those who have been downtrodden and not able to receive justice in the courts or from their fellows.
  - a. There were many of these people in Palestine in Jesus' day.
  - b. To those who are downtrodden and have been denied justice, Jesus assures them that God has not forgotten their condition.
3. The word may also refer to those who are seeking to be righteous in God's sight. That is, obedient to his will.

F. The merciful.

1. Notice that the first four beatitudes deal with a person's state of mind – the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, and those who seek righteousness or justice.
2. The fifth beatitude deals with a person's behavior – the merciful.
3. The Parable of the Good Samaritan, which will be studied later, shows that this quality may have been lacking among the religious leaders of Jesus' day.

G. The pure in heart.

1. This can refer to either purity of motive, or purity from a moral/ethical point of view.
2. Ps. 24:3-4 refers to the worshipper who comes to God with "clean hands and pure heart." See also Ps. 51:10 where the psalmist asks God to "create in me a pure heart O God."
3. This may also refer to a person's motives being pure. James 4:8 speaks of the need for the double-minded to purify their hearts. See also I Tim. 1:5 and II Tim. 1:3.

H. The peacemakers.

1. How does one attempt to attain his goal? The Zealots of Jesus' day thought they had to show their loyalty to God by violent acts against those they considered their unholy aggressors.
2. Many times throughout history, the downtrodden and oppressed have resorted to revolutionary means to solve their problems. Jesus says, that violence is not the way of his kingdom.

3. The lifestyle of the children of God is to be one of peace.
- I. Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.
    1. The follower of Jesus may be called on to suffer for his faith. Jesus says, “Don’t be surprised if this comes to you.”
    2. Notice that the suffering of persecution is “for righteousness sake.”
    3. The theme of persecution is particularly strong in Matthew. Remember he was writing to the Hebrew Christians about A.D. 68, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, when they were under constant persecution from their fellow Jews.
  - II. The essence of discipleship. Salt and light. 5:13-16
    - A. The life of the disciple in the broad sense.
      1. Here Jesus says their lives should be characterized by two important components, best illustrated by salt and light.
      2. This introduces the next section of the Sermon on the Mount.
        - a. In the remainder of the Sermon Jesus shows how the salt and light really make themselves known.
        - b. Jesus is nowhere stating that people are to live this way in order to receive the kingdom, but that those who have received the kingdom are to live this way.
      3. In this short section Jesus shows that salt which has lost its taste and preserving power has no further use, and light which is hidden and provides no illumination is useless.
    - B. The salt of the earth.
      1. The Greek word translated “loses its saltiness” is **μωραίνειν** (*morainein*) means to play a fool, or to act like a fool, or have the character of a fool. It is the same word used in 5:22.
      2. Jesus says that it is the ultimate folly (foolishness) for a person to think of having salt with no preserving power, no cleansing properties, and no power to enhance the taste of food.
      3. It is therefore as worthless as the actions of a fool.
    - C. The light of the world.
      1. Light is a very important metaphor in the Bible.
        - a. God is light, Christ’s followers are light, we are to walk in the light, Jesus is the light of the world, and Christians are to shine as lights in the world.

- b. Light is consistently associated with purity, good, and righteousness whereas darkness is associated with evil and sin.
- 2. Christians are to be lights in a world of darkness.
- 3. “A city set on a hill” would bring to the mind of his listeners the city of Jerusalem. The Jews would have immediately thought of the city of Jerusalem because it is situated on a high hill.
- 4. A light which is hidden is useless. This is like having a flashlight with dead batteries. All of the components may be in place, but if the batteries are dead the flashlight is useless.
- 5. Jesus says we are to let our good lives be seen by others. Compare this with his statement in 6:1-4 where he says we are to do our good deeds in secret.
  - a. Notice that in 5:16 the purpose of letting men see your good works is that others will glorify God.
  - b. The warning of 6:1-4 is that our good works are not to be done for the sake of glorifying ourselves.

### III. Jesus and the Law of Moses. 5:17-48

#### A. Jesus’ respect for the Law.

- 1. He affirmed that the Law was good, just as Paul later stated. See Rom. 7:7-12
- 2. Jesus is going to radically deepen their understanding of the Law, but he wants at the outset to assure them that he has profound respect for it. He is not trying to destroy the Law or their respect for it.
- 3. Jesus does this by giving six contrasts between the “letter of the law” and the “spirit of the law.”
- 4. It should be noticed also that Jesus’ attitude toward the Law was contrary to that of the rabbis and Pharisees who almost completely missed its spirit.
- 5. Jesus tells his audience, “What I am about to say is radically different from the rabbinic and Pharisaic teaching you have been used to hearing. Do not conclude from this that I am opposed to the Law. I am not opposed to it, but I want you to understand the spirit of the Law as well as the letter of the Law.”
  - a. “You have heard that it was said . . .,” contrasted with “But I tell you . . .”
  - b. The Rabbis appealed to tradition when interpreting the Law, saying that when the Messiah he would give the final and true interpretation.
  - c. When Jesus made the statement, “But I tell you . . .” he did not appeal to tradition, and was therefore indirectly claiming that he was in fact the Messiah.

#### B. The six contrasting elements used by Jesus.

- 1. Murder.

- a. Jesus internalizes the commandment concerning murder. The source of a person's conduct is the heart, and Jesus goes directly to the thoughts of the heart when he looks at the application of the Law.
  - b. Malicious anger, as the root of murder is a very serious offence.
  - c. Jesus relates this to calling another person a fool. The word "fool" was a much stronger insult in Jesus' day than what is implied in modern day culture. It was very close to the next word, "raca."
  - d. "Raca" is a transliteration from the Aramaic directly into the Greek. The term basically meant a worthless, stupid blockhead.
  - e. Notice that each of these words, as well as the act of murder diminishes the person rather than some wrong or sinful act of the person.
    - 1) It ignores the fact that all people, regardless of their status or behavior, are created in God's image, and each is the object of God's love.
    - 2) It is therefore an insult to God for some one to say that God's highest earthly creation, one who is the object of God's love, created in God's own image and one for whom Christ would ultimately die a worthless person.
  - f. In contrast to all of this, Jesus says that it is important then to settle matters quickly with your adversaries, and if someone has something against you, leave your gift at the altar (a figurative expression for worship) and go be reconciled to the one you have offended.
    - 1) In this passage the offender is told to initiate the reconciliation.
    - 2) See also Matt. 18:15-17 where Jesus says that the offended party has the obligation to initiate reconciliation.
2. Adultery.
- a. Jesus dealt with the condition of the heart prior to committing murder, and now applies the same principle concerning committing the overt act of adultery.
  - b. There is first the sin of the heart (the desire to commit adultery with her) before one commits the sin of the body (the overt act of sexual relationship between two people, one of whom is married to some one else).
  - c. To look at a woman with the desire to commit adultery with her is a severe sin of the heart. Notice that Jesus is not speaking of the God-given sexual desire between male and female.
3. Divorce. This will be dealt with in a later lesson on Matthew 19.
- a. Why do people divorce?
  - b. Why is divorce on the rise in the world in general?
  - c. What can be done to prevent divorce?
4. Oaths.

- a. The Jews recognized the importance of fulfilling their oaths, but they had managed to get around that obligation. See Matt. 23:16-22
  - b. Jesus objected to the whole idea of taking an oath as a means of strengthening one's promises. He denies the necessity of taking oaths, but emphasizes the fact that his followers must be people of absolute integrity
5. Retaliation.
- a. Exodus 21:23 is the source of the teaching, "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."
  - b. The original commandment had to do, not with personal vengeance, but with the justice of like punishment for injuries. Remember the theocratic nature Israel in the beginning of its nationhood.
  - c. See also Rom. 12:17-21 and I Pet. 2:21-24 where both Paul and Peter speak against personal revenge. Peter cites the example of Jesus.
6. Love for enemies.
- a. Love for one's neighbors is cited in Lev. 19:18.
  - b. Hating one's enemies is not specifically stated, but the Jews took note of a number of passages where God had instructed them to destroy certain nations or cities.
  - c. What is hate? Why is it wrong to hate other people?
  - d. To the Jews of Jesus' day, fellow Jews were the "neighbors" while Gentiles were the "enemies." Note the Parable of the Good Samaritan.
  - e. God shows his unconditional love to all mankind by sending the blessings of sunshine and rain on all, whether they are righteous or unrighteous.
  - f. There is no reward for loving those who love you. Even the grossest sinners and the pagans will do that.
  - g. "Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- 1) The Greek word translated "perfect" is *τελειος* (*teleios*).
  - 2) The meaning of the word is "to be complete or whole."
  - 3) Perfect (complete) holiness is to be the goal of all followers of Christ. No goal short of this is worthy of a child of God. See I Pet. 1:16, quoted from Lev. 19:2.

## Chapter XII

### Sermon on the Mount

#### Matthew 6

##### Introduction:

1. In chapter 5 Jesus dealt with the letter and spirit of obedience, citing various Old Testament commandments.
  - a. Jesus showed that there is more to disobedience than just the overt committing of a forbidden act.
  - b. Murder and adultery are preceded by thoughts of the heart, and it is in the heart that man must deal with these temptations.
2. In chapter 6 he will deal with the devotional life of his followers, and contrast outward conformity with inward spiritual devotion.
3. Finally in this chapter he will show how our inward spirituality invades the practical conduct of our lives in providing the necessities of life. The answer deals with one's priorities – what is the most important thing in your life.

##### I. **6:1-4.** Correct behavior but wrong motives.

- A. The Jews and their acts of righteousness. Jesus lays out the foundation for his remarks in 6:2-18.
  1. Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting were very important to the Jews of Jesus' day.
  2. Each of these lends itself to outward conformity without involving sincerity of devotion.
  3. Almsgiving can be done, not for the purpose of helping the poor, but as a means of gaining approval of one's fellows, or a public demonstration.
    - a. Jesus' statement, "to be seen of men" applies to each of these statements.
    - b. Jesus says "they have received their reward" when speaking of those who pray to be seen of men. This applies to each of the other acts mentioned. See vss. 2, 5, and 16.
    - c. In this statement, Jesus uses a commercial word, **απεχειν** (*apechein*) which means "to receive payment in full." It was in common use in Jesus day for business receipts, tax receipts, or personal debts.

##### B. **6:2-4.** Almsgiving.

1. The Jews believed that almsgiving was one of the most important indicators of a person's devotion.
2. A statement in one of their books (Tobit 12:8) says that "Almsgiving delivers from death, and it purges away all sin."



- a. The rabbis taught that almsgiving in secret was commendable. “He who gives alms in secret is greater than Moses.”
  - b. There were many who did so in secret, but also many who made a display of their gifts.
3. The word for hypocrite in Greek is **υποκριτης** (*hypocritēs*) which originally meant a play actor, or one who played the part of another.
  4. The question Jesus raises is, “Why do you give to the poor? Is it to be seen of men, to gain favor with God, or to help the poor?”
    - a. Giving because of a sense of duty.
    - b. Giving for prestige or bringing credit to himself.
    - c. Giving in order to secure God’s blessings.
    - d. Giving out of a sense of love for God and for the poor.

## II. 6:5-8. Prayer.

A. How *not* to pray. What is prayer, and what practices did Jesus condemn in reference to prayer?

1. Formalized praying.
  - a. “Saying” a prayer (repetition of a memorized or read prayer).
  - b. “Praying” a prayer (speaking to God from one’s heart as he would pour out his heart to another person).
2. Praying in private.
3. Praying in public.

B. Repetition of words and phrases without thought or meaning.

1. One may babble his prayers repeating the same thing every time, and do so without thought of God. Note the prayers of worshippers of Baal at the time of Elijah’s encounter on Mt. Carmel. I Kgs. 18:26.
2. “Meaningless repetitions.”
3. “Emergency” praying.
  - a. Praying only when there is a crisis, expecting God to get you out of this problem.
  - b. “Bribing” God. “God, if you will \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

C. 6:9-15. How to pray. “This is *how* to pray.”

1. Notice that this is not a prayer to be repeated, but one which should serve as a model to build on. It is comprehensive in its scope.
2. Addressing God as Father.

- a. Hallowed is your name. “Sanctified and holy.” The Greek word is ἡγιαζω (*hagiazō*) meaning to hold in sanctity and holiness.
  - b. This model prayer begins with praise of God.
3. Addressing God’s will.
  - a. Praying for God’s kingdom to come.
  - b. Praying for God’s will to be done perfectly.
4. Praying for our needs.
  - a. Asking for the necessities, not the luxuries.
  - b. Notice that there is not a long list of “things” for which we are to pray.
  - c. God is not “Santa Claus.”
5. Forgiveness.
  - a. We are to ask for forgiveness as we forgive others.
  - b. The Greek word is **οφειλημα** (*opheilēma*). The root word means “a debt I owe to another.” The derivative word means a delinquency or offense, or a sin.
    - 1) This is not the usual word for sin. The word usually found is **αμαρτια** (*harmartia*) which means to miss the mark.
    - 2) In Luke’s account, he uses the word **αμαρτια** (*harmartia*), sins, asking for God’s forgiveness for ourselves, but he uses **οφειλημα** (*opheilēma*), debts, when speaking of our forgiveness of others. Matthew uses **οφειλημα** (*opheilēma*) to refer to both.
    - 3) The word translated “debts” **οφειλημα** (*opheilēma*) was a part of the Hebrew understanding of sin, but would probably not have been understood as such by Gentile readers of Luke’s Gospel.
  - c. Before a person can be forgiven, he must have a sense of sin and guilt.
  - d. What is forgiveness? What is reconciliation? See II Cor. 5:11-21.
  - e. What are some practical problems we might have to face in forgiving those who sin against us?

### III. 6:19-34. Treasures, necessities, and worries.

#### A. 6:19-24. Treasures in heaven or on earth.

1. Jesus begins this section by showing that what a person values the most shows what are his priorities in life.
2. Preservation of wealth in Palestine. The perils of moth, rust, and thieves.

- a. The danger of moths. In ancient Palestine, much of a man's wealth may be from very expensive garments.
  - b. The danger of rust. The danger of wealth being eaten away.
    - 1) The word translated rust comes from **βρωσις** (*brōsis*) which generally refers to food which is eaten away by vermin, rats, etc., although it can also refer to ordinary rust.
    - 2) Likely, this statement refers to a man's wealth of corn, wheat, etc. being stored away in his barns, only to have them eaten by vermin, worms, rats, and mice.
  - c. The danger of thieves.
    - 1) The idea of "breaking in" is literally to "dig through." Stealing was especially threatening in these situations in the ancient world.
    - 2) Walls of homes were easy to dig through since they were frequently constructed of weak baked clay.
3. No one can serve two masters.
- B. 6:25-34.** Therefore do not be deceived about what is truly valuable in your life.
- 1. Worries over food. The design of these verses is to show mankind's need to depend on God.
    - a. God cares for the birds of the air.
    - b. This does not mean that none of them perish or that they do not have to work for their food.
    - c. The Greek word **ἡλικία** (*hēlikia*) can refer to one's stature or height, or to the length (years) of his life. Either idea will apply to this passage
  - 2. Worries over your clothing – how you look.
    - a. Look at the lilies of the field.
    - b. Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like the lilies.
    - c. God cares for things of nature. You are worth much more than the birds and the flowers. Therefore God will care for you also.
  - 3. The conclusion of the matter is:
    - a. The Gentiles, who do not know God, seek after the things of this life.
    - b. God knows what we need.
    - c. Our duty is to seek the kingdom of God first, and God will add the necessities of life to us.

# Chapter XIII

## Sermon on the Mount

### Chapter 7

#### Introduction:

1. The final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount deals in a variety of topics rather than following specific themes as in Chapters 5 and 6.
2. In this chapter, as in 5 and 6, there is use of parallelism in the presentation.
  - a. Chapter 5, after introducing the sermon (5:3-20), is characterized by the expression, “You have heard that it was said to people long ago.” See 5:21, 5:27, 5:31, 5:33, 5:38, and 5:43. This expression, or slight variations of it, is followed by “But I tell you.”
  - b. Chapter 6 is also characterized by parallelism. After introducing the basic concept of righteousness in vs. 1, Jesus develops and defines it by once again using the parallel expression “when you.” See 6:2, 6:5, and 6:16.
  - c. Chapter 7 has different characteristics. It is a miscellaneous collection of ethical principles, and the conclusion of the Sermon.

#### I. 7:1-6. Unrighteous judgment and hypocrisy.

##### A. Charitable judgment of others.

1. The Rabbis of Jesus’ day warned against abusive judgment of others. Some taught the principle, “He who judges his neighbor favorably will be judged favorably by God.”
2. Practices which taught, “Think the best of other people,” were encouraged.
3. Throughout the Sermon, Jesus is attacking the hypocrisy of the Pharisees since they found all sorts of faults with others without considering their own faults.
  - a. This continues through the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter. See also Matt. 23.
  - b. **Κρινετε** (*krinete*) (from **κρινω** – *krinō*), translated “judge,” is in the Greek present tense indicating continuous action. “Do not keep on judging.” That is, “Do not indulge in the habit of judging.”
4. Judgment for us will come in accordance with our judgment of others.
  - a. Is Jesus speaking of the final judgment?
  - b. Is there possibly a double meaning in this statement? Might Jesus also be saying that we will be judged by our fellows by the same standards we are using in judging them?

##### B. Why do we misjudge others?

1. History is full of the misjudgments of talented people.
2. Einstein was told that he was a slow learner, and would never succeed as a mathematician.
3. The work of poets, musicians, artists, and others have been declared inferior, only to become world famous when rightly appreciated.
4. It is impossible for us not to judge other people.

C. Jesus illustrates the principle.

1. **καρφος** (*karphe*). This is a small speck of anything. Since Jesus was a carpenter, and he uses a plank or beam in contrast to the speck, he probably is thinking of a small speck of sawdust.
2. **δοκος** (*dokos*) means a beam or large piece of timber.
  - a. Notice the contrast Jesus uses. In the field of communications and debate this is referred to by the Latin phrase, “*reductio ad absurdum*.” That is, the reduction of an argument or statement to an absurdity, or something which is ludicrous, irrational, and illogical.
  - b. Such judging is hypocrisy. It says, “I refuse to look at my own outrageous behavior, but I have the right to criticize the minutest infraction of another person.”
3. Jesus says, “Work on remedying your own life before you take on the task of correcting the life of another.”
4. This admonition does not deal with seeing the faults of others while not seeing one’s own faults, but it emphasizes one’s refusal to look at one’s own faults while criticizing the faults of others.

D. Do not give that which is sacred to the dogs, and do not cast your pearls before swine.

1. Dogs and swine were the two most despised animals among the Hebrews.
2. This necessitates “judging” or determining whether or not to take the word to some people.
3. **Matt. 10:11-16.** Jesus told the apostles to look at the situation in a city and determine if they should spend their time with them.
4. Can we treat all people alike? Should we treat all people alike?

II. **7:6-12.** Asking, seeking, and knocking.

A. The basic meaning.

1. The present imperative tense is used in each of these statements.
  - a. These admonitions could be translated, “You must keep on asking, you must keep on seeking, and you must keep on knocking.”

- b. The participles and verbs which described the result of this asking, etc. are also in the present tense, and could be translated, “He who keeps on asking also keeps on receiving, he who keeps on seeking also keeps on finding, and he who keeps on knocking will keep on finding that the doors will open. This last statement is in the future tense.
  - 2. This is an assurance of God’s faithfulness in light of our own persistence.
  - 3. **Lk. 18:1-7.** Jesus gave the Parable of the Unjust Judge in order to teach persistence in prayer.
- B. 7:9-12.** What will God give and not give?

- 1. He will not give us something for the purpose of destroying or hurting us.
  - a. There are no conditions added to this.
  - b. The answers to the questions about a father and his son are obvious.
- 2. We who are “evil” (inadequate) know how to give good gifts to our children. God, infinitely wiser, knows what we need before we ask.
- 3. The “Golden Rule” follows. Notice how it is applied.
  - a. Since God wants to give us only what is good for us, so we ought to treat others this way.
  - b. The negative form of the Golden Rule was found among the Jewish rabbis of Jesus’ day.
    - 1) Hillel, a famous rabbi contemporary with Jesus was asked by a Gentile to teach him the whole Law.
    - 2) Hillel’s reply was, “What is hateful to yourself, do to no other; that is the whole Law, and the rest is commentary.” They did not have the positive expression however.
- 4. The negative simply says we are to “refrain.” The positive says we are to act.
  - a. The negative emphasizes minimum behavior. The positive emphasizes a proactive life.
  - b. The negative can be performed with no thought of love – it can even be done with hate. The positive emphasizes higher attitudes and paves the way for love.
  - c. The negative says, “I must not injure this person.” The positive says, “I must do something good for this person.”

- III. 7:15-27.** The conclusion of the Sermon. Basically the ethical teaching of the Sermon concludes with 7:14. Jesus then begins his concluding observations.
- A.** The warning concerning false prophets.

1. The word prophet is sometimes used in much the same way as we use the word preacher. The Old Testament “prophets” were those who proclaimed a message.
  2. During and after the time of Samuel there were schools for training of prophets (those who proclaimed a message). They frequently spoke against Israel’s apostasy, their indifference toward the poor and underprivileged, and those who denied judicial justice to the less fortunate. See I Kgs. 20:35, II Kgs. 2:3-5, 5:22, Amos 7:14.
    - a. **Jer. 6:13-14, 8:11.** Jeremiah warns against prophets who say “‘Peace, peace,’ and there is no peace.”
    - b. **Ezek. 22:27-28.** Ezekiel warns against prophets who whitewash the sins of the people.
  3. Jesus says that a prophet will be known by the fruit he produces.
  4. Remember that Matthew wrote his Gospel to the Jewish Christians about A.D.68-70. This statement would have been especially interesting to those Christians because of the persecutions they were undergoing, and the false teachings which had arisen among them.
    - a. The *Didache*, written in the beginning of the second century A.D., paraphrases Jesus’ statement as a warning to the Christians of that time. It gives a “test” for a true or false prophet.
    - b. One of the tests for a true prophet was interesting because some of the self-styled prophets traveled from place to place, and were interested only in money and “a free lunch.” The *Didache* reads, “He [the prophet] shall remain one day, and, if necessary, another day also; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. . . If he asks for money he is a false prophet.” (*Didache*, chapters 2-3.)
  5. False prophets will appear to be “sheep” but they are really “wolves.”
    - a. In ancient times shepherds were known to wear clothing (usually a sheep-skin mantel) which identified them as shepherds in much the same way that ancient Greek philosophers wore their philosopher’s robes. Prophets frequently wore a prophet’s mantle or cloak. See I Kgs. 19:13, 19, II Kgs. 1:8, and II Kgs. 2:11-14.
    - b. False prophets then might not be easily recognized because they wore the clothing of a true prophet. (Clerical clothing.)
- B. 7:21-23.** An application of this principle.
1. Not every one who proclaims and confesses the “Lord” will enter the kingdom.
  2. The basic warning of the previous verses is that false prophets will be clever and deceitful.

- a. Here, Jesus says they will even proclaim Christ as Lord and will perform miracles, yet they will be false teachers
  - b. Many of the ancient false teachers claimed to heal the sick, cast out demons, and perform other “miracles.”
  - c. Many times the early Christians (second and third centuries) did not so much deny the miracles of the heathens and false teachers as they opposed the source of the “power.”
3. **Matt 7:21.** The only real proof of the validity of one’s teaching is whether he “does the will of my father who is in heaven.”
  4. Jesus’ final verdict for them is, “I never knew you. Away from me you evil-doers!”

Conclusion:

1. Jesus concludes the Sermon by speaking of the wise and foolish builders.
2. This is the final test of true discipleship.



## **Chapter XIV**

### **A Group of Miracles**

#### **And**

### **Other Events in Galilee**

#### **Introduction:**

1. We want to look at a group of miracles to see some things which were characteristic of the miracles of Jesus.
2. In the next chapter we will investigate the nature and character of Biblical miracles.

#### **I. Healing the leper.**

**Matt. 8:1-4 Mk. 1:40-44 Lk. 5:12-14**

##### **A. Leprosy and the Law of Moses.**

1. Among the ancient people, the word leprosy covered a wide variety of skin diseases, not only the disease which contemporary medicine defines as leprosy.
  - a. Lev. 13-14 gives tests for leprosy, and their procedures with the sufferer.
  - b. They had to be put outside the community.
  - c. Some of these skin diseases may have been contagious, but were not incurable.
2. If the signs of the disease disappeared, the sufferer had to present himself to the priest who would affirm that the skin no longer showed signs of disease.
3. The sufferer then offered a sacrifice, and was allowed to return to the community.

##### **B. The healing.**

1. Notice that the man did not ask Jesus to ask God to heal him, but recognized the power within Jesus himself.
2. When Jesus spoke the words, Mark says that the leprosy left the man “immediately.”
3. Each of the evangelists records the words of Jesus that the man should not tell anyone about the miracle. Mark says that the man spread the news everywhere.
4. It is important to notice the “matter-of-fact” way that the miracle is presented in the gospels – no fanfare.

#### **II. The healing of the Centurion’s paralytic servant.**

**Matt. 8:5-17 Lk. 7:1-10**

**A. The synagogue at Capernaum.**

1. Present day ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum date from the second or third century A.D.
2. Luke says that the Jews reported that the centurion “loves our nation, and built our synagogue.”

**B. Matthew and Luke describe the circumstances somewhat differently.**

1. In Matthew the centurion himself goes to Jesus, but in Luke the elders of the Jews go to Jesus in behalf of the centurion. They entreat Jesus to come, because the centurion was worthy of Jesus’ attention.
2. In Matthew Jesus tells him to go home, that the servant is healed according to the faith of the centurion. In Luke, this is left out.

**C. The centurion.**

1. A centurion was a Roman soldier over 100 men.
2. He seemed to respect the conduct of the Jews who did not go into the houses of Gentiles.
3. The relationship between Romans and Jews was almost always very tense, and this would probably be seen as a very unusual circumstance.
4. The centurion had authority over his men, and recognized Jesus as a man who had authority.
5. His faith was greater than that of the Israelites.
  - a. Notice Matthew’s statement (not shared by Luke) concerning the messianic banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the children of the kingdom (Jews) would be cast out. See Matt. 8:11-12
  - b. How would this have fit into Matthew’s goal in writing his Gospel?
6. Notice also that the faith of the centurion was not a simple belief in the existence of God, but the confidence that Jesus could intervene – trust.
  - a. This is contrasted with the faith of the Jews who believed strongly in God, but placed no trust in Jesus Christ.
  - b. They constantly found fault with him although they affirmed his healing power.
7. The faith of the centurion, not the miracle story seems to be the climax of the narrative. This miracle gives a sort of working definition of faith *i.e.* trust in action.
8. One characteristic of Luke’s Gospel is that it mentions Jesus compassion for non-Jews more frequently than the others. Remember that Luke writes primarily for the Greek people whereas Matthew is writing to the Jewish people.

Luke is the only one who records the Parable of the Good Samaritan. How does this incident fit into the audiences of both Matthew and Luke?

III. The healing of the son of the widow of Nain. Only Luke records this.

**Luke 7:11-17**

A. The circumstances.

1. The city of Nain is not mentioned anywhere else. It is thought to have been located at or very near the modern city of Nain, about 6 miles southeast of Nazareth.
2. Once again the miracle is told without fanfare.

B. The results.

1. The son is raised.
2. The people believe a great prophet has arisen among them.

IV. Anointing at the House of Simon the Pharisee. **Lk. 7:36-50.**

A. Notice verses **Luke 7:31-35.**

1. What accusations are brought against Jesus?
2. Why could verses 31-35 be considered a fitting introduction to the narrative concerning the anointing at Simon's house?

B. The elements of the story.

1. Jesus dining at the house of a Pharisee.
2. The intrusion of the woman and the anointing.
3. Simon's secret reasoning.
4. The parable of the two debtors.
  - a. What is the object of the parable? "One who is forgiven much loves much."
  - b. What does this mean?
  - c. The two debtors owed differing amounts, but were equally forgiven.

C. Applications.

1. What was Simon's opinion of himself?
2. What was his opinion of the woman?
3. Why were both of Simon's opinions faulty?
4. What was Jesus' application concerning Simon?
5. What was his application concerning the woman?
6. What stands in the way of our willingness to forgive others?

V. The raising of Jairus' daughter, and the healing of the sick woman.

**Matt. 9:18-26                  Mark 5:21-43                  Luke 8:40-56**

A. Jairus' contact with Jesus.

1. He was a ruler of the synagogue, therefore a prominent Jew.
2. Probably appointed by the elders of the synagogue to care for the business of the synagogue.

B. The sick woman touching Jesus' garment interrupts the incident.

1. Notice the faith of the woman. How is her faith seen?
2. Jesus commends her faith.

VI. The second rejection at Nazareth.                  **Matt. 13:54-58                  Mk. 6: 1-6**

A. Some of the Jews questioned Jesus' source of wisdom since he was not educated as a rabbi.

1. What was Jesus response?
2. Compare this with the first rejection in **Luke 4:14-30**.

VII. The Death of John the Baptist.                  **Matt. 14:1-12                  Mk. 6:14-29                  Lk. 9:7-9**

A. The fame of Jesus gave rise to the account of the death of John.

1. Herod Antipas was tetrarch (king of  $\frac{1}{4}$  part) of Galilee, 4 B. C. - 39 A. D. He was one of the sons of Herod the Great.
2. The Circumstances.
  - a. Antipas had married the daughter of Aretas, King of Nabateans. The Nabateans were descendents of the Old Testament Edomites, and lived in an area south of the Dead Sea, where the ancient city of Petra is located.
  - b. Antipas however, fell in love with Herodias, wife of his half-brother Philip.
  - c. Antipas abandoned his lawful wife, the daughter of Aretas, and took Herodias. He intended to kill his wife, but she escaped and returned to her father.
  - d. John denounces Herod Antipas for his immoral action.
  - e. Josephus mentions John's death at Machaerus, a Roman fortress near the Dead Sea.
  - f. Based on Josephus' history the daughter of Herodias who danced for Herod at this time was Salome.
3. John was beheaded, and his head was given to Salome who gives it to her mother, Herodias.



- b. This is especially not true of the Hebrews. Note their disdain for heathenism with its outlandish claims. The Jewish Law (Old Testament ) prohibited magic, witches, and various other superstitious activities.

B. What is a miracle?

1. “Events in the external world brought about by the immediate power of God, and intended as a sign or a means of attestation. They circumvent natural law in some respects.”
2. “An interference with nature by supernatural power.” C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, p. 15.

C. God and miracles.

1. To believe in God means to believe in the possibility of believing in miracles.
  - a. God does not exist within nature, nor is he confined to the realm of nature.
  - b. If he created anything, ever, then in the nature of things he did it through supernatural means.
2. The claim of Jesus: “Believe me for my works’ sake.” John 10:30, 14:11.

II. Classification of Jesus miracles. Words used to describe the miracles.

- A. Miracles: Greek word is **δυναμις** (*dunamis*) meaning: “a mighty work, a power.” This may refer to either natural or supernatural power or work. It is the word from which we get the English word dynamite.
- B. Wonder: Greek word is **τερας** (*teras*) meaning: “a marvel. Something appealing to the senses.”
- C. Sign: Greek word is **σημειον** (*sēmion*) meaning: it “points to a spiritual truth of which the miracles becomes an outward expression.”
- D. Spheres of Jesus’ miracles.

1. Nature: Matt. 14:22. Jesus walking on the water and stilling the storm.
2. Power over disease: Matt. 8:5-13. Servant of the Centurion healed.
3. Power over demons: Mk. 5:1-19. Gerasene demoniac healed.
4. Power over death: John 11:1-44. Raising of Lazarus.

III. Characteristics of Jesus miracles.

A. They were in a historical framework.

1. They are represented as really happening, not mythological stories, fabrications, or taking place in a dream or vision.

2. Compare the “wonder-tales” and Greek or Roman mythological stories to Jesus’ miracles.
  3. They are represented as happening in real time, not as mythologies.
- B. Reasonableness.
1. They are not unreasonable, yet cannot be explained completely through reason.
  2. They are easily accepted, once a person accepts the personal existence of God as the Bible speaks of his nature.
  3. These narratives are neither fantastic nor exploited. (Compare this with the apocryphal gospels.)
- C. They are useful.
1. They were not designed to meet human curiosity or as a display of magic, but to meet human needs.
  2. They relieved hunger, disease, suffering, etc.
- D. They were worked in a variety of spheres.
1. If they had been only in one sphere, such as healing, or casting out demons could have been suspect.
  2. Compare this to modern day claims of miracles.
- E. They were performed openly.
1. Many of the spectators were hostile to Jesus, and ultimately rejected and killed him.
  2. Even his enemies did not make an issue of denying his miracles. John 11:47. Instead, they felt compelled to explain the miracles by saying he had a demon. Mk. 3:22.
- F. They were instant in almost every case. No one was told to go home and pray, or go home and wait for the cure.
- G. They were gratuitous.
1. There was never a cost, nor suggestion of a cost or any attempt to extract money from the recipient or audience.
  2. Hellenistic healing cults of that day always expected payment. Note also contemporary televangelists and their appeals for money.
- H. Freedom from retaliation.
1. Although he had the power to do so, he never used his power to harm anyone.
  2. Note the contrast with Greek and Roman mythologies.

3. Two of the disciples challenged Jesus to allow them to use call for fire from heaven to devour his adversaries, but he refused to allow it. See Luke 9:54.

I. The power was resident in Jesus.

1. “With authority he . . .” “Even the winds obey his voice.”
2. He was able to impart this power to others. Matt. 10:1

IV. The purpose of the miracles of Jesus. It was not the same in every case.

A. They accredited – authenticated – the mission and purpose of Jesus.

1. The miracles showed his power over evil, nature, etc.
2. The people expected that the Messiah would perform miracles. John 7:31.

B. The miracles became part of the message and mission of Jesus. They revealed part of his nature, mission and message.

1. A proclamation that evil was not supreme.
2. A proclamation that God had intervened in human affairs.
3. A proclamation of the nature of God.
  - a. God is not merely a policeman, a judge, or a condemner of men.
  - b. He is a God of mercy, compassion, and grace.

V. The response to the miracles of Jesus by his contemporaries.

A. Faith and the miracles.

1. Although faith is universally required for salvation, it is seldom stated as a requirement from the recipients of Jesus’ miracles.
  - a. “He could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief.” Mk. 6:5-6.
    - 1) This passage refers to Jesus own refusal to perform miracles on a faithless hypocritical people.
    - 2) He did not force his miracles on anyone.
  - b. Since his works were part of his message, he no more forced his works on people than he forced his message on them.
2. Some examples of faith connected with miracles.
  - a. Luke 18:42. “Your faith has saved you.”
  - b. Matt. 9:29. “According to your faith be it done.”
  - c. Matt. 9:2. “Jesus, seeing their faith . . .”
3. Some examples where faith was not required, or seemingly a part.



- a. Matt. 8:23. Stilling the tempest. “O you of little faith.” In each of the miracles dealing with the spheres of nature there was no direct connection with faith.”
    - b. John 11:1-54. Raising of Lazarus.
    - c. Matt. 28. Jesus’ own resurrection.
    - d. Matt. 8:14-17. Healing of Peter’s mother-in-law. Notice the lack of faith on part of the disciples even after these first miracles.
  - 4. Where faith was present, it was not so much a condition as it was a manifestation of the person’s basic response to Christ. The power was always within Christ, not the power of faith within the recipient.
- B. Faith was not always a response of the people who saw the miracles.
- 1. John 12:37. “Although he did so many signs before them, yet they did not believe.”
  - 2. Feeding of the 5,000. Were the only ones who were fed those who had faith? Most of the multitude deserted him shortly afterward. John 6:66-67.
  - 3. The Jews, even after the crucifixion, did not deny that the miracles performed by the apostles were real. Acts. 4:215-16. See also John 11:47. “What shall we say, for this man does many signs?”

## Some Examples of Jesus' Miracles

The examples below show the various realms in which Jesus performed his miracles.

### I. His power over nature.

- A. Stilling the Tempest.  
**Matt. 8:23-27      Mark 4:35-41      Luke 8:22-25**
- B. Walking on the water.  
 Matt. 14:22-33      Mark 6:45-51      John 6:15-21
- C. Changing the water into wine.  
**John 2:1-11**
- D. The miraculous catch of fish  
**Luke 5:1-11**
- E. Feeding the 5,000  
 Matt. 14:15-21      Mark 6:35-44      Luke 9:12-17      John 6:5-14

### II. His power over disease.

- A. Healing the Nobleman's son  
**John 4:46-54**
- B. Healing Peter's mother-in-law.  
**Matt. 8:14-15      Mark 1:29      Luke 4:38-39**
- C. Healing the leper  
 Matt. 8:1-4      Mark 1:40-45      Luke 5:12-16
- D. Healing the Centurion's servant.  
**Matt. 8:5-13      Luke 7:1-10**
- E. Giving sight to the blind.  
**Matt. 9:27-31**
- F. Healing the ten lepers.  
**Luke 17:11-19**

### III. His power over demons.

- A. The demoniac in the synagogue.  
**Mark 1:23-26      Luke 4:33-36**
- B. Controversy concerning the source of his power.  
**Matt. 12:22-37      Mark 3:19-30      Luke 11:14-23**
- C. The demoniac in Gadara  
**Matt. 8:28-34      Mark 7:24-30**
- D. The Syro-Phoenician woman.  
**Matt. 15:21-28      Mark 7:24-30**

### IV. His power over death.

- A. Son of the widow of Nain    Luke 7:21-22

- |                            |                      |                     |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| B. The Daughter of Jairus. | Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26 | Mark 5:22-24,       |
| 35-43 Luke 8:41-42, 49-56  |                      |                     |
| C. Raising of Lazarus.     |                      | <b>John 11:1-54</b> |
| D. Resurrection of Jesus.  |                      |                     |
| <b>Matt. 28:1-15</b>       | <b>Mark 16:1-8</b>   | <b>Luke 24:1-12</b> |
|                            |                      | <b>John 20:1-9</b>  |

## Chapter XVI

### The Lord of the Sabbath

### Ceremony and the Value of a Human Being

#### Introduction;

1. There is frequently a clash between ceremonial religious obligations and human responsibilities.
  - a. Is it more important to observe the commandment not to work on the Sabbath or to perform an act of kindness or mercy on the Sabbath?
  - b. When does ceremony or ritual get in the way of the value of a human being?
  - c. What should take precedence in such situations?

#### I. The disciples walking through the grain fields.

**Matt. 12:1-14 Mk. 2:23—3:6 Lk. 6:1-11**

##### A. They were hungry and plucked some ears of grain and ate them.

1. According to Jewish law, a passer-by was permitted to help himself to grain in this manner. See Deut. 23:25.
2. At this time the Pharisees had come up with 39 principal classes of work which were unlawful on the Sabbath.
  - a. Reaping was one, and the disciples were thought guilty of that.
  - b. Threshing was another, and the disciples were also thought guilty of that.
  - c. Notice that both of these interpretations (and condemnations) came from tradition, not from the Law.

##### B. The reaction of the Pharisees.

1. Their accusation. “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”
2. Were they violating the Sabbath or violating one of the traditions of the elders?

#### II. The response of Jesus.

##### A. David and his companions when fleeing from Saul.

1. I Sam. 21:6. David and his men were hungry.
  - a. The Law of Moses specified that the showbread was only for the priests to eat.
  - b. David and his men ate the showbread.

2. Jesus' observation is that there was no violation of the Law in that case because human needs were at stake.
    - a. Human needs surpass ceremonial demands.
    - b. What might be some abuses of this principal?
- B. The priests desecrating the Sabbath but are guiltless.
1. Notice that Matthew includes this but Mark and Luke do not. This might have suited Matthew's purpose since he wrote to the Jews.
  2. The later rabbis tried to create explanations for David's actions to relieve him of guilt.
    - a. Jesus' reasoning was that responding to genuine human needs surpasses ceremonial requirements.
    - b. The priests, in fact were doing their work on the Sabbath, killing the animals for sacrifice, building a fire, etc. yet were not guilty of breaking the Sabbath. See Num. 28:9-10
    - c. The rabbis felt that they must determine and codify every application which would be considered a violation of the Sabbath.
- C. Jesus' response and application.
1. Vs. 8-9. He claims that he is greater than the temple.
  2. At a previous confrontation in Matt. 9:13 Jesus had told the Pharisees to go find out what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." (See lesson on "Evidence of Growing Opposition.")
  3. If they had understood their own history and law they would not have condemned the guiltless.

### III. Another healing on the Sabbath.

- A. The man with the withered hand.
1. Note that Matthew represents Jesus himself asking if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath whereas Mark treats the question a little differently. Luke speaks of the incident taking place on another Sabbath, and Jesus asks, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or do to evil, to save life or to destroy it?"
  2. Matthew further shows Jesus challenging them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep. Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."
  3. Jesus asked him to stretch forth his hand, and it was immediately healed.
- B. The Pharisaic response.

1. Once again they were furious at what they considered Jesus disregard for their traditions.
2. The Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.
3. Notice that they were not concerned about the man with the withered hand, but with violation of their own traditions concerning Sabbath observance.

Conclusion:

1. Sometimes religious ceremonial obligations conflict with human values, and the need for compassion. In such cases, the value of the human being is paramount.
2. Keep in mind that these did not necessarily represent the entire religious party of the Pharisees. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, John 3.
3. Below are 39 categories of “work” as define by Orthodox Judaism today.

This list is from “The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise,” showing the contemporary regulations concerning observance of the Sabbath among Orthodox Jews. Each of the categories below have extensive sub-categories and explanations. You may go to: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/shabbat.html> for further information.

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Sowing                  | 22. Untying  |
| 2. Plowing                 | 23. Sewing two stitches  |
| 3. Reaping                 | 24. Tearing  |
| 4. Binding sheaves         | 25. Trapping   |
| 5. Threshing               | 26. Slaughtering   |
| 6. Winnowing               | 27. Flaying  |
| 7. Selecting               | 28. Salting meat   |
| 8. Grinding                | 29. Curing hide  |
| 9. Sifting                 | 30. Scraping hide  |
| 10. Kneading               | 31. Cutting hide up  |
| 11. Baking                 | 32. Writing two letters  |
| 12. Shearing wool          | 33. Erasing two letters  |
| 13. Washing wool           | 34. Building   |
| 14. Beating wool           | 35. Tearing a building down  |
| 15. Dyeing wool            | 36. Extinguishing a fire   |
| 16. Spinning               | 37. Kindling a fire  |
| 17. Weaving                | 38. Hitting with a hammer  |
| 18. Making two loops       | 39. Taking an object from the private domain to the public, or transporting an object in the public domain |
| 19. Weaving two threads    |  |
| 20. Separating two threads |  |
| 21. Tying                  |  |

## Mishnah Shabbat, 7:2

As stated many of the categories listed above need further explanation, and those explanations further define what is and is not permissible on the Sabbath. Keep in mind, all of these were traditions, and were not part of the Law of Moses.

The following is a quotation taken from the essay from which the list was copied. This is a recognized source of Orthodox Jewish information. The following is a quotation.

All of these tasks are prohibited, as well as any task that operates by the same principle or has the same purpose. In addition, the rabbis have prohibited coming into contact with any implement that could be used for one of the above purposes (for example, you may not touch a hammer or a pencil), travel, buying and selling, and other weekday tasks that would interfere with the spirit of Shabbat. The use of electricity is prohibited because it serves the same function as fire or some of the other prohibitions, or because it is technically considered to be "fire."

The issue of the use of an automobile on Shabbat [the Sabbath], so often argued by non-observant Jews, is not really an issue at all for observant Jews. The automobile is powered by an internal combustion engine, which operates by burning gasoline and oil, a clear violation of the [Torah](#) prohibition against kindling a fire. In addition, the movement of the car would constitute transporting an object in the public domain, another violation of a [Torah](#) prohibition, and in all likelihood the car would be used to travel a distance greater than that permitted by rabbinical prohibitions. For all these reasons, and many more, the use of an automobile on Shabbat is clearly not permitted.

As with almost all of the commandments, all of these Shabbat restrictions can be violated if necessary to save a life.

## Chapter XVII

### Selected Parables Of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:1-50

Introduction:

1. What is a parable?
  - a. Greek word is **παραβολη** (*parabolē*) meaning something which is thrown along side something else.
  - b. Frequently parables take the form of stories.
2. Jesus was not the first to use parables, but he is the best know of all teachers who used them.
3. Some things a parable is not:
  - a. Just an illustration or example, although Jesus used these also.
  - b. It is not an allegory, although a few times Jesus used allegories and they were referred to as parables.
  - c. It is not a fable. A fable breaks the bounds of the natural and has trees talking, animals acting as humans, etc. Fables frequently have sarcasm but parables generally do not.
4. Parables usually, though not always, have a single main focus.

#### I. Jesus and the mystery of parables. **13:10-17**

- A. After giving the Parable of the Sower, and before he explained it the disciples came and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”
  1. Jesus answered by saying:
    - a. “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you (the disciples), but not to them.”
    - b. Jesus further told them, “Whoever has will be given more, and he will have and abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”
    - c. Finally Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10, “through seeing, they do not see; through hearing, they do not hear or understand.”
  2. The parables test one’s desire to know Jesus and his teaching, just as Isaiah’s statement did for those who heard him.



- a. One who has that desire will find that desire satisfied.
- b. One who does not, will see only the surface truth, and will not come into a personal relationship with Jesus.

B. The parables are probing if one allows them to be.

- 1. The parable of the sower for example seeks to cause the hearer to ask, “Which kind of soil am I?” But for those who have no such desire, it is just a story without much personal application.
- 2. Jesus does not explain this parable to the crowd, but only to those who inquired.

II. The Parable of the Sower. The responsibility of the one who hears the message of Christ.

**Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23.**

A. The parable itself.

- 1. A familiar scene in Palestine, and familiar types of soil.
- 2. Notice the four types of soil.

B. Jesus’ explanation of the parable.

- 1. The seed is the word of God.
- 2. The pathway soil.
  - a. It would be packed down and hard, and no one would expect seeds to germinate in it.
  - b. This represents one who hears the word, but before he can understand it, “the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown.”
  - c. Sometimes, a person will hear a smattering of the gospel, but before he investigates it in order to understand it he is distracted, and the word leaves him. One’s priorities play an important role here.
  - d. Some hearts have been hardened by past bitterness toward religion, crushing circumstances of life, or other events. Some people can visit a place of great beauty, but come away not remembering anything they saw because they are too preoccupied with trivial and unimportant matters.
  - e. The message of Christ is treated this way in the minds of many people.
- 3. The rocky soil.
  - a. A person hears the word, and immediately accepts it. This is soil which has so many rocks that there is little nourishing earth there. The seed springs up quickly, but soon withers.

- b. Although this man accepts the word quickly, he does not stop to count the cost of discipleship, so he quickly falls away because the word has no root in him.
- c. It is similar to getting married quickly, considering only the privileges, and not the obligations and responsibilities.

4. The thorny soil.

- a. This is a person of high intentions and creative imagination, but he is not wholehearted in his acceptance of the word.
- b. He is plagued by competing loyalties and divided interests.
- c. “The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.”
- d. Too many outside interests replace the centrality of the word, and he loses interest.

5. The good soil.

- a. The good heart. Luke refers to him as having a noble and good heart.
- b. He grows and produces fruit.
- c. The parable doesn’t indicate that he is a faultless person or that he has no weaknesses, but that he is honest and sincere.

C. A practical application of the parable.

- 1. By showing how men treat the word of God, Jesus shows how the word is spread, and consequently how the kingdom grows.
- 2. This is the major underlying point of the parable.

II. Other parables in Matt. 13.

**Matthew 13:24-50**

- A. Parable of the Weeds. 13:24-30, 36-43
- B. Parable of the Mustard Seed. 13:31-33
- C. Parable of the Yeast. 13:34-35
- D. Parable of the Hidden Treasure. 13:44
- E. Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. 13:45-46
- F. Parable of the Net. 13:47-50

Conclusion:

- 1. Every parable has its limitations. We must not press the analogies beyond their intended limits.
- 2. Soils in nature cannot change their own character, but human hearts can change.

## **Chapter XVIII**

### **Growing Opposition**

#### **Introduction:**

1. During Jesus' early ministry people flocked to him, some only to find that he didn't fit their expectations, while others seem to have been genuinely confused and sought clarification.
    - a. The result of this was that some ceased to follow, apparently feeling that their hopes were not fulfilled in this man.
    - b. Others actively opposed him.
    - c. Some accepted him.
  2. Much of the opposition to Jesus came because of his' refusal to be bound by the traditions of the elders, many of which ignored the intent of the Torah. However, some of the objections came from a lack of understanding or simply a refusal to accept his claims.
    - a. Not only did Jesus ignore the traditions, but he exposed many of them as voiding the Torah.
    - b. The current lesson illustrates some of these.
- I. The healing of the paralytic.  
Matt. 9:1-8 Mk. 2:1-12 Lk. 5:17-26
- A. The events of the healing.
1. Luke introduces the story by stating that the Pharisees and teachers of the law (scribes) were present from many parts of the land, while Matthew and Mark bring this in as a part of the story itself.
  2. Mark identifies the city as Capernaum, which Matthew refers to as Jesus' own city. After his rejection in Nazareth, Jesus became a resident of Capernaum.
  3. Mark and Luke tell how the men dug through the roof of the house in order to get their friend into the presence of Jesus.
  4. All three writers record the fact that in these acts Jesus saw their faith, and said to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven."
  5. The idea that someone other than God claimed the power to forgive sins was repugnant to the Jewish leaders, and they said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming."
  6. Jesus realized what they were thinking, and said, "Which is easier to say, 'your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' he said to the paralyzed man, 'Get up, take your mat and go home.'"
  7. The response of the crowd was that they praised God that he had given such authority to men. Mark adds, "We have never seen anything like this!"

B. An analysis of the miracle and its implications.

1. The essence of this event is that Jesus claims power to forgive sins. This also was the offense which the Scribes saw.
2. The Pharisees set themselves apart from the masses of the Jews, giving unusual attention to ceremonial defilement, and holding strictly to the traditions of the elders handed down over time. The name "Pharisee" means one who separates himself. They were therefore called the "Separatists."
3. The Scribes were experts in the Jewish religion.
4. Jesus pronounced forgiveness for the man.
5. Jesus used this miracle to attest to his power to forgive.
  - a. "So that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins,' He said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat, and go home."
  - b. In this, Jesus makes a claim which, to the Jews, was a claim to be equal with God. We must remember that the Jews had no concept of the trinity or even the idea of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They considered such beliefs as polytheism. Jews today also consider the Christian belief in the trinity as completely foreign to the Old Testament teaching of monotheism.

II. The Call of Levi (Matthew) and the opposition.

Matt. 9:9-13 Mk. 2:13-17 Lk. 5:27-32

A. Matthew was a tax collector (publican).

1. Publicans were Jews who collected taxes for the Roman government.
2. They purchased the right to collect taxes within a certain jurisdiction. Many times they abused this and collected exorbitant amounts, cheating their own people.
  - a. Generally the Jews felt that the publicans had "sold-out" their Jewish loyalty to the Roman government.
  - b. Most of the time they were classified with the lowest sinners.

B. Jesus calls Matthew to follow him.

1. Notice that labels meant nothing to Jesus. He considered the worth of each individual, not his "class" within his society.
2. The call of Matthew, so far as we know, completed the full complement 12 apostles.

C. Jesus ate with Matthew and many "tax collectors and sinners."

1. The act of sharing a meal (table fellowship) with another person was very important to the Jews, and was an indication of one's acceptance and respect for the invited guests.
2. The Pharisees asked, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" There was an evident feeling of self-righteousness among some of the Pharisees.
3. What was Jesus' response? The sick need a physician, not the healthy.
  - a. What do you think is implied when Jesus speaks of the healthy? See also Matt. 7:1-5 about the speck and the log.
  - b. Go find out what this means, "I desire mercy not sacrifice." This is from the Old Testament, Hosea. 6:6. Notice the context of this Old Testament quotation.
    - 1) In Hosea's day, Israel had fallen into idolatry, but they still kept many of the ceremonies of the Law.
    - 2) Their mistake was the same as that of the Pharisees – religious ceremony without righteous behavior is empty. See also I Sam. 15:22-23.
    - 3) For many of the Pharisees ceremonial observances were paramount even to the neglect of practical goodness and showing mercy.
4. Jesus showed that ceremonial religion was not a substitute for a righteous life.
5. Jesus said he came, not to call the righteous (self-righteous) but sinners.
6. In a later lesson we will see how Jesus applied this. (Matt. 12:7)

### III. The testimony of Jesus concerning John the Baptist. (A number of miracles and other things intervened between the healing of the paralytic and this story.) Matt. 11:2-19 Lk. 7:18-35

#### A. The emissaries of John the Baptist.

1. John sent them to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?"
  - a. Why would John send them with this question?
  - b. Discouragement of John?
  - c. To affirm to his own followers the answer Jesus gave?
2. Jesus' answer was for them to go tell John that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the dead raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them.

#### B. Jesus testimony concerning John.

1. What did you go out into the wilderness to see?

- a. A reed shaken in the wind?
    - b. A man dressed in fine clothing?
  - 2. John was not a man who bent with the wind, or one who was living a luxurious life.
  - 3. Jesus says John was the greatest of the prophets.
- C. The kingdom and violence.
- 1. This may be a comment of Matthew (the writer) rather than a continuation of the statement by Jesus.
    - a. Matthew may be saying to his own readers (the Jewish Christians), that from the time of this encounter until the time of Matthew's writing (about D.D.68-70) violent men try to take the kingdom *i.e.* violent men persecute Christ's followers.
    - b. From that time forward, the kingdom would suffer violence because violent men would attempt to take it by force.
  - 2. At this time Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy concerning Elijah. When the angel promised to Zechariah and Elizabeth (father and mother of John) that they would have a son, it was said that he would come in the spirit and power of Elijah. See Malachi 4:5, Lk. 1:17, and the conversation following the transfiguration in Matt. 17:10-13.

#### IV. The Death of John the Baptist. Matt. 14:1-12 Mk. 6:14-29 Lk. 9:7-9

- A. The fame of Jesus gave rise to the account of the death of John.
- 1. Herod Antipas was tetrarch (king of ¼ part) of Galilee, 4 B. C. – A.D. 39. He was one of the sons of Herod the Great.
  - 2. The Circumstances.
    - a. Antipas had married the daughter of Aretas, King of Nabateans. The Nabateans were descendants of the Old Testament Edomites, and they lived in an area south of the Dead Sea, known as Petra.
    - b. Antipas however, fell in love with Herodias, wife of his half-brother Philip. Antipas then divorced his wife, the daughter of the Nabataean king, and imprisoned her, apparently planning to kill her.
    - c. She escaped and fled south to her father the king of the Nabateans.
  - 3. John denounced Herod Antipas for his immoral action.
    - a. Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced for Herod at his birthday party, and Herod was so pleased that he offered Salome anything she wished, up to half of his kingdom. Mk. 6:23.

- b. Her mother told her to request the head of John the Baptist. Herod had John beheaded in prison, and gave the head to Salome who then gave it to her mother. See Matt. 14:1-12.

B. Josephus speaks of John's imprisonment and death under Herod Antipas.

1. Josephus tells us that John was imprisoned at the Machaerus Stronghold located just east of the Dead Sea. Neither the Bible nor Josephus gives any details of John's arrest.
2. The stronghold had been built by Alexander Janneus, of the Hasmonean family (103-76 B.C.), and it was destroyed about 63 B.C. by one of Pompey's generals. Later it was rebuilt by Herod the Great, who used it as one of his palaces. Upon his death it passed to his son Herod Antipas

Conclusion:

1. Opposition against Jesus continued to grow.

## **Chapter XIX**

### **Jesus and the Pharisees**

#### Introduction:

1. The opposition to Jesus centered primarily in the Pharisees during his lifetime.
  - a. Opposition to legalism and tradition.
  - b. After his death and resurrection, the Sadducees became his adversaries because they did not believe in the possibility of a resurrection.
2. The Pharisees saw themselves as the strongest exponents of the Law, and the “keepers of orthodoxy.”
3. Review the beliefs of the Pharisees.

#### I. Pharisaic objections to Jesus.

##### A. The authority of Jesus.

1. They challenged his authority.
  - a. Jesus was untrained in theology, yet he was seen as a teacher even by his opponents.
  - b. The cleansing of the temple. Matt. 21:23-32. “Who gave you this authority?”
2. They asked for a sign.

##### B. Jesus claimed the right to forgive sins.

1. The Pharisees considered this blasphemy since only God could forgive sins.
2. This may also be tied to the fact that they had no concept of the Trinity. Jesus’ claim in John’s Gospel that “I and the Father are one,” would have been equally blasphemous. They could not accept the idea that God had a Son in the sense of the incarnation.
3. Healing the paralytic. Mark 2:1-13. He showed by this healing that he was not abusing his power to forgive sins.

##### C. Guilt by association; the Publicans and “sinners.”

1. Jesus ate with them.
2. His response was, “The whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick.”

##### D. Jesus opposed and also ignored the traditions which did violence to the Law.



1. Ceremonial washing one's hands. Mark 7: 1-13.
2. He told them that the word of God was made void by their traditions.

E. Jesus' unique relation to God. John frequently shows Jesus referring to this.

1. John 5: 15-18. "Making himself equal with God."
2. "I and the Father are one."
3. "The Father is in me, and I in the Father."
4. "No man comes to the Father but by me."
5. "If you have seen me you have seen the Father."

## II. The tactics of the Pharisees.

A. Attempts at public embarrassment.

1. Mark 2:16. "How is it that he eats and drinks with the publicans and sinners?"
2. Demand for a sign.
  - a. They wanted a token of his divinity.
  - b. Yet, they refused the many miracles (signs) he performed.

B. Ensnaing questions.

1. This tactic was used especially toward the close of his ministry
2. Matt. 22:15-22, 23-33. Paying taxes to Caesar and the question of the woman who had many husbands who died. "Whose wife will she be at the resurrection?"

C. Religious pressures. Banning a man from the synagogue for becoming a follower of Jesus.

D. Crucifixion.

## III. Jesus' reaction to the Pharisees.

A. Some favorable reactions.

1. Three times Luke tells of Jesus' dining at the home of a Pharisee.
2. Nicodemus (John, 3:1-7) was a Pharisee.

B. Confrontations.

1. Jesus accused them of setting aside the commandments of God in order to keep their traditions. Mark 7:9-13, "Corbin."
2. They accused him of blasphemy claiming his power was Satanic. Mk. 3:22ff.

C. Jesus accused them of hypocrisy.

1. Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee and the Publican.
2. Matthew 23. The entire chapter is devoted to woes to the Scribes, Pharisees, calling them hypocrites. (Note the variety of accusations.)

Conclusion:

1. A historical study of the Pharisees gives a consistently good picture of them as a religious force, except as the Gospels describe them in contact with and their opposition to Jesus.
2. This shows that Jesus' teaching was radical, not in keeping with tradition or the general teaching of the day.

## Chapter XX

### Feeding the 5,000

### The Discourse on the Bread of Life

- I. Feeding the 5,000. This is one of the few miracles recorded in all four of the Gospel.  
**Matt. 14:3-21 Mk. 6:32-34 Lk. 9:10-17 John 6:1-13**
  - A. Background and comparison of the accounts.
    1. Both Matthew and Mark tell of the death of John the Baptist in some detail, but Luke only mentions it in passing.
      - a. John does not give any account of the death of John the Baptist.
      - b. The three synoptics show the feeding of the 5,000 following the report of John's death.
    2. There are no significant differences in the four accounts.
  - B. The miracle itself.
    1. Critics have attacked this miracle (and others as well) as impossible, and various "explanations" have been given to account for it.
      - a. A.M. Hunter quotes William Temple as saying, "This, however, is creditable only if St. John is right in his doctrine of our Lord's Person. If the Lord was indeed God incarnate, the story presents no insuperable difficulties. But of course such a creative act is quite incredible if he is other or less than 'God incarnate.' Those who do not share John's doctrine of Christ's person will 'rationalize' the miracle. They will say that what Jesus did was to set an example of sharing with his disciples which induced the crowd to produce their own food and share with each other." (A.M. Hunter, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, pp. 64-65)
      - b. Once a person has accepted the claims of Jesus concerning his own person, the miracles become an accepted part of his mission.
    2. John alone mentions that these were barley loaves. This was the bread of the poor.
- II. The discourse on the Bread of Life. John alone records this discourse. It is characteristic of John to follow a miracle with a theological or Christological discourse, a dialogue, or other follow-up information.

A. In this discourse Jesus gives us the first of the “I am” sayings. There are seven of these metaphors in John, each of which describes an important aspect of either his mission or his person (Christology). They do not occur in the synoptics

1. John 6:35. “I am the bread of life.”
2. John 8:12. “I am the light of the world.”
3. John 10:7. “I am the gate (door) for the sheep.”
4. John 10:11. “I am the good shepherd.”
5. John 11:25. “I am the resurrection and the life.”
6. John 14:6. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”
7. John 15:1. “I am the true vine.”

B. All of the Gospel writers constantly refer to three basic groups of people in contact with Jesus.

1. They are the multitudes, the Jews, and the disciples.
  - a. Although we cannot always differentiate between “the multitudes” and “the Jews,” usually the multitudes are those common folk who followed Jesus for a variety of reasons, some selfish, others sincerely, still others out of curiosity, etc.
  - b. “The Jews” are usually identified as those of some official standing, or in some sort of leadership role (scribes, Pharisees, members of the Sanhedrin, chief priests, elders of the people, etc.).
  - c. “The disciples” usually refers to the twelve. However, on some occasions, such as we have in John 6, the word applies to a wider range of followers, but not a great enough number to constitute “the multitude.”
2. In the incident in John 6 there is the multitude spoken of (see Jn. 6:1-40), but they seem to merge with the “Jews” spoken of in 6:41-52.
3. The disciples (followers) must have included many who followed Jesus, but in John 6:66-67 it seems that this is narrowed down to the twelve.
4. Throughout this encounter, much like that of the Samaritan woman at the well, there is an emphasis on the inability of the people to perceive the spiritual dimension of Jesus’ message.
  - a. This same phenomenon is seen in the synoptics as Jesus presents some of his parables. See Matt. 13:11-15, 18-23.
  - b. Many times even the twelve apostles do not grasp the spiritual dimension of his teaching.

C. The beginning of the encounter.

1. Jesus accused the multitude of following him in order to be fed again. He then tells them that they should work for the food which “endures to eternal

life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the father has placed his seal of approval.” 6:27.

- a. Notice that Jesus says something here which is designed to create questions in their minds. They had no reference point for determining what Jesus might mean by those statements. He also used this tactic with Nicodemus (Jn. 3) and the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn. 4).
  - b. When asked what the work of God was, Jesus replies that it is to believe on the one he has sent, obviously referring to himself.
2. Jesus and the Bread from heaven. This part of the exchange stimulated a question among them concerning the bread from heaven. The Jews considered Moses, the lawgiver, to be a God’s prominent messenger to them. They believed that when the Messiah came he would be a similar figure, providing them with food, just as the Israelites ate the manna in the wilderness.
- a. This was considered a hallmark of Moses’ presence among Israel
  - b. Therefore they believed that when the Messiah came, he also would provide food. They envisioned the Messianic kingdom as a grand banquet. Consequently, they asked, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we might see it and believe you?” Notice that Jesus had just given them a sign . . . feeding the 5,000.
  - c. Jesus’ response is that God would give them true bread from heaven, not like the manna which their forefathers ate, but were still subject to death.
3. The multitude enthusiastically asked for the bread Jesus had spoken of. “From now on, give us this bread.” 6:34. At this point Jesus made the statement, “I am the bread of life. He that comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” 6:35.
- a. Jesus used variations of this statement, “I am the bread of life.”
    - 1) “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” 6:41
    - 2) “I am the living bread.” 6:51
  - b. Notice the content of these statements.
    - 1) When Jesus referred to himself as the Bread of life, he also said that this bread had the power to sustain their live eternally.
    - 2) He claimed that eternal life comes from the Father, but through himself.
2. After Jesus made the statement that he was the true Bread that had come down from heaven (6:38) to do his Father’s will, the Jews objected on the grounds that they knew his parentage, therefore how could he say he had come down from heaven.

- a. The Jews could not conceive of the divine God being manifested in any way except supernatural.
  - b. They could not therefore see Jesus as a human being and at the same time as one who came down from heaven (divine).
- 3. Jesus then offers a challenge to them. “Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.” 6:45.
  - a. The implication is that those who do not come to him haven’t really listened and learned from God. To the Jews, who placed great emphasis on the fact that they were God’s chosen people, this statement from Jesus would have been a very great insult.
  - b. Jesus ties this to the statement about their fathers eating the manna, still being subject to death, but if one eats the bread he will give to them that person will live forever.
  - c. The climax of this idea is in 6:51 where Jesus says, “This bread is my flesh.”

#### B. Eating the flesh and drinking the blood.

- 1. Jesus’ statement created an argument among the Jews and they asked, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”
  - a. The idea of eating human flesh was (and is) utterly obnoxious to the Jews.
  - b. Jesus seems to have used this figure for the very purpose of creating questions and curiosity.
- 2. “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” 6:53
  - a. In A.D. 809 a man named Rabburtus introduced the idea of transubstantiation.
  - b. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century it became generally accepted by the Catholic Church, and by the 13<sup>th</sup> century (1215) at the 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council it was made an official doctrine of the Catholic Church.
  - c. Jesus’ statement does not refer to the Lord’s Supper, or Eucharist.
    - 1) There is nothing in the context to bring us to that conclusion, and the people to whom Jesus spoke would have had no idea of the Lord’s Supper because it was not even instituted until just before the crucifixion.
    - 2) Jesus is speaking of the necessity of nourishing one’s spiritual self with Christ’s word (“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” John 6:53)

- d. By making this comparison Jesus says that unless you take me into your spiritual self, eat me, digest me, and assimilate me you have no spiritual life. The multitude and the Jews did not understand this.
  - e. The contrast is, “Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.” 6:59.
3. How did the people respond to the signs given by Jesus?
- a. Some looked at them with curiosity or for personal gain. The multitude which Jesus had fed the day before followed him so they could be fed again.
  - b. Some looked at them analytically, trying to figure out just how they could get around its message. Acts 4:16-17 gives an example of this. When the apostles later performed various miracles the Jewish leaders discussed the situation privately saying, “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it.”
  - c. Some admired these signs. Many followed Jesus because they saw the signs he did.
  - d. Some believed the signs, but submitted to peer pressure. Jn. 12:42
4. Look at the function of a highway sign which reads: “Road ends, 500 feet.” The message is what is important, not the composition of the sign, its material, its artistic quality, or anything else. If one fails to heed its message, the sign is of no use to him. Jesus is contending that this is the basic problem of the Jews. They saw the signs (miracles) and did not deny them. However, they failed to believe his message and claims.

## II. The aftermath of the discourse.

- A. Jesus was aware that the disciples (more than just the twelve) were grumbling about this, and he added fuel to the fire.
- 1. He speaks of ascending to where he was before.
  - 2. Some of you do not believe.
  - 3. One’s own disposition toward truth plays an important role here. “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”
    - a. This brings up the question, “How does the Father enable one to come to Jesus?”
    - b. Jesus’ explanation of the reason for parables, and the Parable of the Sower give some idea of the importance of one’s disposition toward truth. See Matt. 13:13-15, 18-23.
- B. Upon hearing this many left him.

**Chapter XXI**  
**Peter's Confession**  
**Jesus Predicts His Death**

Matt. 16:13-28 Mk. 8:27-31 Lk. 9:18-27

Introduction:

1. The confession of Peter and the ensuing conversation is one of the most controversial passages in the New Testament. But this is not as much a matter of the intrinsic difficulty of the passage as it is because of its historical implications.
  2. In the early second century various church writers spoke of Peter in glowing terms as preeminent among the twelve. This passage, along with a few more became the primary passages to which these second and third century writers referred.
- I. Some of the theological questions which arise out of this passage.
- A. The divinity of Jesus affirmed.
1. This is one of the few times when Jesus affirms that he is the Son of God.
    - a. Although Jesus himself did not make that claim at this time, Peter made it for him, and he pronounced a blessing on Peter for saying this, adding that God himself had revealed that truth to Peter.
    - b. The word "Christ" (Greek **Χριστός**, *christos*) is equivalent to the Hebrew word "Messiah," meaning one who is anointed. It is a title, not a name, although in the early church it became the name by which Jesus was referred to.
    - c. Peter's confession is literally, "You are the anointed one, the Son of God."
    - d. Frequently in both English and Greek the word **Χριστός** is preceded by the definite article.
  2. This word was one of the *nomina sacra* (sacred names), and was abbreviated when written in the Greek manuscripts. Scribes would write the first letter of the name as a capital letter then insert the grammatical ending with a line over the ending. Thus **Χριστός** became **Χϛ̅** in the manuscripts. This is the way we got Xmas standing for Christmas.
  3. In the culture of Israel, as well as other cultures throughout the Old Testament period people in high places, both secular and religious, were frequently "anointed" with oil.
    - a. The word "anoint" is not a religious word, but used commonly of smearing oil or other substance on food or in the use of cosmetics (Amos 6:6), and other uses. It is frequently used in reference to a religious practice of appointing a person to an ecclesiastical or religious work or office.



- b. Some of the prophets and kings in the Old Testament were specifically anointed. Priests were also. In I Kings 19:16 there is instructions for Elijah to anoint Jehu to be king, and Elisha to be the prophet to succeed Elijah.
  - c. The Greek word translated “to anoint,” is **αλειφω** (*aleiphō*).
4. In studying the life of Jesus it is important to remember that the Jewish expectation concerning the Messiah was different from Jesus’ understanding of himself and his mission.

#### B. Is Peter the rock?

1. First, it should be noticed that the theme of the passage is not Peter as the foundation of the church, but the Messiahship of Jesus.
2. This passage and the question it presents concerning Peter as the foundation of the church has been studied and debated since the second century.
3. K.S. Latourette, noted church historian of Yale University says, “Whatever else this passage may mean, it does not so much as hint that there was to be a series of successors to whom Peter was to have authority to transmit the ‘power of the keys.’ In the final chapter of *The Gospel According to John* we have the command of Jesus to Peter to tend and feed his sheep, but there is no indication that he meant this exclusively for Peter, or that he gave Peter the authority to transmit the responsibility to others.” (K. S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, pp. 112-113)
4. Some New Testament scholars in the past have contended that there is an important difference between the Greek words **πετρος** (*petros*, masculine) and **πετρα** (*petra*, feminine) which occur in the passage.
  - a. The position is that *petros*, translated “Peter,” means a “small rock or stone,” while *petra*, translated “rock,” means a “foundation stone.”
  - b. Although there is a recognized difference between the use of these two words, most scholars now generally believe the difference is not significant enough to make a very strong case for this interpretation.
  - c. Jesus would have been speaking the Aramaic language, which had no such gender distinction.
  - d. This is overcome to some degree by the fact that in the Greek such a distinction is possible and is made by Matthew. There is no Aramaic Gospel of Matthew, and the writer of the Greek Gospel of Matthew showed that distinction.
5. Notice that Jesus, not Peter is consistently referred to as the “rock” or foundation of the church.
  - a. I Cor. 3:11 refers to Jesus as the only foundation of the church.
  - b. In Matt. 21:42 Jesus claims that he himself is the stone the builders rejected (**λιθος** -*lithos*). See also Acts 4:10 concerning this.

6. For Matt. 16:16-18 to refer to the formation of the papacy with Peter as the first pope a number of additional things must be proved.
  - a. Show that Peter is indeed the foundation of the church.
  - b. Show that Peter was authorized by Christ to appoint a successor.
  - c. Show that Peter did in fact appoint a successor, and know who that successor was.
  - d. Show that his successor was also given the power to appoint a successor *ad infinitum*.
  - e. Show that the College of Cardinals or others official body of the Catholic Church was duly authorized by Peter or his successor to make such succeeding appointments.
  - f. Show that there is an unbroken line of successors duly appointed from Peter to the present pope. There were times in the history of the Catholic Church when there were two and one time three duly appointed popes at the same time, each claiming the other was an imposter. Note the "Great Schism" of 1378-1417 during which there were three duly elected "popes."

C. Was Peter prominent or was he preeminent in the early church?

1. The position and prestige of the church in Rome grew during the last part of the first and early second centuries.
  - a. Its political situation lent itself to this, since it was the center of the Roman Empire.
  - b. Historians believe that by the end of the first century the church in Rome might have been the largest church in the West.
2. Tradition has it that Peter suffered martyrdom in Rome about A.D. 60-65.
3. Clement of Rome in about A.D. 95 wrote a letter to the church in Corinth, encouraging them to respect Paul's teaching concerning division. Some scholars believe that Clement's statements indicate that he believed that he exercised authority over the church at Corinth.
4. Irenaeus in about A.D. 185 stated that it was necessary for every church to agree with the Roman church. However, many historians believe that this was not an ecclesiastical position, but one of recognition of Rome's leadership.
5. Cyprian (c. A.D. 200-258) and other third century writers wrote that while Peter and the Roman church were prominent, they contended that all apostolic churches (those supposedly begun by an apostle) were equal in authority. He referred to the Roman bishop as "first among equals."
  - a. Cyprian believed strongly in apostolic succession, but not in the absolute authority of the bishop of Rome as later developed.

- b. By the time of Cyprian great strides had already been made toward the monarchical episcopate, that is, a ruling bishop over a broad geographical area.
- c. Historians agree that the type of organization which evolved into the Roman Catholic Church came from the administrative model of the Roman government.

D. The promise to build the church.

- 1. The word church only occurs twice in the Gospels. They are Matt. 16:18 and in Matt. 18:17.
- 2. The Greek word is **ἐκκλησία** (*ekklēsia*), and it means an assembly or gathering of people.
  - a. It was a common word, and was without religious connotation.
  - b. In Acts 19:32 it is used to identify a mob riot against Paul.

II. Jesus predicts his death.

A. This is the first time Jesus specifically predicts his own death.

- 1. He makes this prediction at least three times in the Gospels.
- 2. Jesus foresaw both his death and resurrection.
- 3. Notice that he said he would die at the hands of the chief priests, elders, and scribes. These groups made up the Jewish Sanhedrin before whom Jesus was later tried and condemned.

B. The effect of Jesus' announcement.

- 1. Peter immediately took issue with Jesus about this. Matthew says he took Jesus apart and rebuked him for saying such a thing.
- 2. Jesus then rebuked Peter, calling him Satan. The Greek word basically means "the adversary."
- 3. Jesus then made a stern statement concerning the cost of discipleship.
  - a. A person must take up his cross and follow Jesus.
  - b. The one who would preserve his life will lose it, but the one willing to lose his life will preserve it.

## Chapter XXII

### The Light of the World

### Spiritual Freedom

#### I. The light of the world and Jesus' claims for himself.

##### **John 8:12-30**

##### A. The setting.

1. The pericope John 7:53 – 8:11 is not found in any Greek manuscript earlier than the 6<sup>th</sup> century. This includes most of the best manuscripts extant. In the Ferrar Group, an important group of cursive manuscripts, it appears after Luke 21:38. Some scholars believe that would be the appropriate place for it.
2. You may notice that the conversation Jesus was having with the Jews in John 7:52 seems to continue easily at John 8:12. The conversation of John 7 was taking place in the Temple at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7:1-2.
  - a. On the first night of the Feast a ceremony called the “Illumination of the Temple” took place. Four gigantic candelabras, located in the Court of the Women, were lit and they illuminated the whole temple area. It was claimed by some that it lit up the whole city of Jerusalem. All that night men danced before the light until morning broke.
  - b. Many Old Testament references showed the Jews that God was their light, and this Illumination of the Temple at the beginning of the Feast memorialized this. See Ps. 27:1, Is. 60:19, etc.
  - c. It was against this historical background that Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”
3. One of John's favorite literary devices is contrast or antithesis – light and darkness, good and evil, from God or from men, flesh and spirit, etc.
  - a. Jesus said, “He who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” 8:12.
  - b. Notice also I John 1:5-10 where John uses light and darkness.
4. The Pharisees reacted with hostility to this statement.
  - a. They questioned his testimony in his own behalf.
  - b. The question arose throughout Jesus' ministry, “Who is this man Jesus?”
    - 1) In 8:12-59 he answers that question. This is important in considering the claims of Jesus.
    - 2) What claims did Jesus make for himself?

##### B. **8:21-30.** Look at Jesus' own testimony concerning himself.

1. Jesus answers in two ways.
  - a. Unlike other men, he knew where he came from, and he knew his destiny. Therefore his testimony concerning himself was true.
  - b. He is inseparable from the Father, and through him the Father testifies of him. This combined witness ought to be considered valid.
2. This line of argument depends entirely on Jesus' claim of his relationship to God. In this connection he says, "You do not know me or my Father. If you knew me you would know my Father."
  - a. Jesus is chiding them because they did not really know God, though they claimed to. They only knew the Law. They had no personal relationship with God, and therefore could not understand the message or claims of Jesus.
  - b. In **16:2-3** Jesus tells the disciples that they would suffer persecution, and even death, because their persecutors did not know God.
3. In **5:16ff** Jesus testified that he had come to do the will of his Father. He was challenged because he called God his Father.
  - a. The Jews considered God as their Father in the corporate sense, but did not personalize it as Jesus was doing.
  - b. This is what was offensive to them when they challenged it. Jesus contended that he did his Father's will. During this same dialogue he refers to himself as the Son, stating that if you do not honor the Son you do not honor the Father.
4. Compare the statements in **5:31** and **8:14**.
  - a. In **5:31** Jesus says, "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth." The Rabbis had laid down the rule that self-testimony was not admissible. Jesus here is speaking of that kind of testimony. However he augments this by saying that John the Baptist had testified of him.
    - 1) In **John 5:36-37** however, Jesus said he had testimony of greater weight than that of John, namely the testimony of God himself.
    - 2) God's testimony was in the works which Jesus did in the Father's name.
  - b. In **8:14** he says that even if he testifies on his own behalf, his testimony is valid, for he knows where he came from and where he was going. But they had no idea where he came from or where he was going. In this statement Jesus is speaking of his own experience.

5. **8:19.** Jesus and the Father.

- a. When they asked, “Where is your father?” Jesus answered, “If you knew me you would know my Father also.”
- b. This was, in fact, an indictment against them for their biased unbelief.

C. **8:21.** “Where I go, you cannot come.”

1. Once again Jesus chides them with a mysterious saying.
  - a. **8:21.** “You will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.”
  - b. **8:24.** “If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.” Notice the gravity of this statement.
  - c. **8:28.** “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claimed to be.” In this he speaks of the crucifixion.
2. Their opportunity to believe would pass, and they would be judged on that basis.

II. The meaning of spiritual freedom. Jesus now turns to those who believed in him.

**John 8:31-41**

A. “If you hold to my teaching then are you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” There are two important elements here.

1. “Hold to my teaching.”
  - a. Discipleship was serious to Jesus. It meant that followers would obey him. “Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me” was the demand.
  - b. A disciple is a learner.
  - c. It is only this kind discipleship what results in freedom.
2. “The truth will make you free.” This was said to those who believed in him.
  - a. Truth does not make the unbeliever truly free. It is the one who believes the truth, and continues as a disciple of that truth.
  - b. Later in John 14, Jesus said, “I am the way, the *truth* and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me.”
  - c. One must believe in the claims Jesus makes for himself, and continue in that teaching.
  - d. He must abide in that teaching as a disciple.

B. The meaning of freedom. What is freedom?

1. Not license.

- a. License is bondage to one's desires, habits, or addictions.
- b. This principle is true politically, socially, economically, and religiously.
- c. Freedom is not the right to do as you please.

2. Freedom requires discipline.

- a. Discipline must center on what is true, not just around social or cultural practices.
- b. Freedom, in the nature of things must have limitations.

3. Discipleship brings freedom from sin.

- a. Jesus recognized that sin was man's fundamental problem.
- b. Take sin out of the world, and you have freedom.
  - 1) Without sin people would respect and love others.
  - 2) Without sin there would be no self-centeredness but generosity.
  - 3) Without sin you have a perfect world.
- c. God's restraints on us are for our happiness as well as demonstrations of our loyalty to Him.

4. Since we do not live in a perfect world, what should be our response to this?

C. Freedom misunderstood.

- 1. The Jew's response: "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been slaves of anyone." They regarded their freedom as a birthright, not as an obligation to God.
  - a. On the face of it, that statement was not true.
  - b. Further, they did not understand the meaning of Jesus' statement. He was not speaking of political freedom, or even of religious freedom.
  - c. Their confidence in being the descendants of Abraham was misplaced, but it was a strong position of the Jewish people of Jesus' day.
- 2. **8:34.** "Everyone who sins is a slave of sin." This is fundamental.
  - a. **Rom. 6:16.** "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to some one to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey?"
  - b. "I have the right to do what I please." Is this freedom? By doing this, one does not do what he likes, he does what his addictions require him to do.
  - c. Further, great thinkers of the world have stated similar things.
    - 1) Socrates said, "How can you call a man free when his pleasures rule over him?"

- 2) Seneca said, "Show me anyone who is not a slave. One is a slave to lust, another to avarice, a third to ambition; all alike to fear." He also said that one can "hate and love his sins at one in the same time." (Seneca, a Roman philosopher was contemporary with Jesus and Paul – 4 B.C.-A.D. 65. He was an advisor to Nero, and fell out of favor with Nero. In 65 he was ordered to commit suicide.)
  - 3) Goethe said, "No one is more a slave than he who thinks himself free without being so." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832. A German writer and philosopher.)
3. **8:36-41.** "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." The only solution is divine forgiveness.
- a. Basically Jesus says, "If you are the children of Abraham, act as Abraham acted."
  - b. "I am a man who has told you the truth, and you want to kill me. Abraham would never have acted that way."
- A. The children of their father. 8:42-47.
1. Why did these people refuse Jesus' words? Notice 8:43-44
  2. What had made them the children of the Devil?
    - a. Was it God's decree?
    - b. Was it their own disobedience?
    - c. Notice vs. 47.



**Chapter XXIII**  
**The Good Shepherd**  
**The Feast of Dedication**  
John 10:1-42

I. Background of the events in this chapter.

A. Shepherds of Palestine.

1. Galilee was primarily a farming area, while Judea was primarily a grazing area. This pervaded their entire Biblical period.
2. The shepherds.
  - a. Shepherds had a very hard life in ancient times. The safety of the sheep required constant vigilance because of thieves, wild animals, and the tendency of sheep to wander away. Sheep are poorly equipped for self protection.
  - b. The sheep pen was usually a walled enclosure with a strong gate, not just a fenced in area as we might suppose today. It usually was in front of the shepherd's house as a sort of open courtyard, and the shepherd would go in and out through the gate.
  - c. The shepherds knew their sheep, and called them by name.
  - d. Throughout the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, God's people are spoken of as his sheep, and He speaks of himself as their Shepherd. This image passes into the New Testament in the teachings of Jesus. See Matt. 9:36, 18:12, Mk. 6:34, Lk. 15:4, etc.
  - e. The leaders of God's people are constantly referred to as the shepherds.
3. The shepherd and his sheep.
  - a. Although some sheep were used for food, they were kept primarily for their wool. Sheep therefore may stay with the shepherd for a number of years, and the shepherds came to know the sheep and the sheep knew their shepherd. Frequently the shepherd would name the sheep, and they recognized his voice and obeyed him.
  - b. The shepherds in Israel went in front of their sheep and led them, and the sheep followed.
  - c. Those who have studied these things have recounted numerous incidents of two or more shepherds having their flocks together, and separating them simply by calling the sheep and the sheep follow. The sheep know the voice of their shepherds.

II. **10:1-18.** Those who enter through the gate vs. those who climb over the wall. This is sometime called a parable (KJV), but it is more like an allegory.

A. This conversation is a continuation of that with the blind man in chapter 9.

1. This encounter involves two basic figures of speech. Jesus says he is the good shepherd, and also that he is the gate to the sheep pen. These present two entirely different images, and ought not to be confused.
2. The chapter must be taken as a whole, and it includes a number of different images.
  - a. Jesus speaks of false shepherds who try to enter the sheep pen by an illegitimate means, climbing over the wall, etc., and he calls them thieves and robbers. The true shepherd is the one who enters through the gate.
  - b. The sheep will not follow the false shepherd. However they will follow the legitimate shepherd because:
    - 1) He enters by the proper means, the gate.
    - 2) The sheep know him and he knows them.
3. Jesus says this to illustrate his claim to be the Messiah, and other claims previously made. He entered the scene legitimately – notice his claims of Messiahship, etc. – whereas false Messiah’s had stolen their way in.
4. Others who have come, making various false claims were thieves and robbers.
  - a. Later Jesus speaks of the hireling who cares nothing for the sheep, but only for his own welfare and wages. Some of the religious leaders of Jesus’ day were that way. What about today?
  - b. The Jews did not understand the symbol Jesus was using. See vs. 6. This sets the stage for what follows.

**B. 10:7-10. “I am the gate.”**

1. He changes the figure of speech here.
2. Those coming before him were thieves and robbers, and the sheep (those genuinely seeking God’s will) did not follow them.
3. In this Jesus affirms that he is the means of entering the true sheepfold. In John 14 Jesus says, “No one comes to the Father except through me.”
4. He contrasts the imposters with himself. They come only to steal, kill, and destroy – that is, they seek only their own welfare – but Jesus came to give life as a sacrifice for sin.

**C. 10:11-15. “I am the good shepherd.”** The image changes and Jesus pictures himself as the shepherd. He then gives various characteristics of a good shepherd.

1. “He lays down his life for the sheep.”
2. “I know my sheep.”
3. “My sheep know me.”

**D. 10:16-18.** Jesus draws certain other corollaries and observations.

1. False leaders (perhaps false Messiahs) are in it for their own good, not the good of the sheep. Consequently, when trouble comes they defect.
2. Just as Jesus knows his sheep and his sheep know him, in a similar way he knows the Father and the Father knows him, he knows his sheep and his sheep know him.
3. He lays down his life for the sheep.
  - a. Shepherds were frequently exposed to attacks from wild animals, marauders, or thieves while caring for the flock. The shepherds were willing to take this risk, whereas a hired hand would run away for his own safety.
  - b. This shows the shepherd's genuine care for the sheep.
4. He has other sheep, not in this fold. He will also bring them in that they may be one fold.
  - a. Without doubt this refers to the ultimate entrance of the Gentiles into the church.
  - b. Old Testament statements predicted this. See Is. 42:6.
5. He lays his life down voluntarily. No one takes it from him, and he will take it up again. He said this speaking of his resurrection.

III. **10:19-42.** The reaction of the Jews. Notice the revised sequence of these events discussed above in section I. We now go to the Feast of Dedication, which takes place in the winter.

A. The background of the Feast of Dedication.

1. This was a national feast instituted by Judas Maccabeus after the recapture of the temple when Antiochus Epiphanes had desecrated it. This event took place in December 164 B.C.
  - a. Josephus notes that since many lights were lit in every house in Jerusalem during this feast, it was frequently referred to as the Feast of Lights.
  - b. This was a noncanonical feast, or one which did not originate from the Old Testament law.
2. Today it is celebrated as Hanukkah, sometimes called the Feast of Lights.

B. The confrontation between Jesus and the Jews.

1. They asked that he tell them plainly if he was the Christ.
2. Jesus replied that the reason they did not accept the testimony of his miracles was that they were not "his sheep."
3. **10:30-33.** The Jews start to stone him, accusing him of blasphemy since he made himself equal with God – "I and the Father are one." 10:30

4. He quotes a statement from the Old Testament Psalms 82:6 which says, “I have said, you are gods. You are all sons of the Most High.” Jesus uses this in a strangely literal way, but it reflected rabbinic exegesis of that day.
5. **10:36.** Jesus asked, “Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son?’”
6. They tried to seize him, but he escaped. The “people” believed him, and remembered what John the Baptist had said about him.

## **Chapter XXIV**

### **God's Concern for the Lost**

#### **Luke 15:1-32**

#### Introduction:

1. Notice the introduction to these parables in 15:1-2.
    - a. The accusation made against Jesus was, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."
    - b. The self-righteousness of the Pharisees caused many of them to consider tax collectors and many common people to be inferior.
  2. Rabbinic custom was strict when it came to eating meals. Certain ceremonial washings dictated by tradition generally took place, and those who were "unworthy" by reason of their ceremonial uncleanness were to be avoided for fear they would "contaminate" the righteous.
  3. God's attitude toward these so-called "unrighteous" people is illustrated in the three parables in Luke 15.
  4. Jesus' response to their accusation is that if a man lost an animal he would go out looking for it. Or if a woman lost a piece of money she would search her house to recover it. Of how much more value is a human being than an animal or piece of money, and how much more, when God's children are lost will God do everything possible to bring them back.
  5. The thrust of these three parables is that God rejoices when any sinner repents. This is particularly noted in last of these three parables, that of the lost son.
  6. Jesus constantly associated with "sinners" for the purpose of redeeming them. He saw all mankind in need of redemption, even those who considered themselves "righteous."
  7. In the parable of the lost son, there is strong emphasis on the self-righteousness of the elder brother, and in this Jesus brings home to his critics their own situation.
- I. The parable of the Lost Sheep. 15:3-7
- A. This parable addresses the question, "What is God like?"
1. Much of the time God is no more to us than a concept – an abstraction – something we believe in (probably), but a Being who means little if anything to us as a driving force in our lives.
    - a. The parable also brings up the question, "Is God active in the world or is he a passive 'force' mostly ignored by mankind?"
    - b. People tend not to think much about God except in times of crisis or tragedy, (then they seem to blame God), or in a time of a great need (and try to manipulate God – "God if you will do this for me I will attend church, or

- do something else for you.”), or the death of a loved one, or suffering severe pain (again, blaming it on God), or in times of extreme joy such as the joy of human love, the birth of a child, etc.
- c. Mankind is satisfied with the symbols of God such as lavish church buildings, art, music, etc., but has lost the essence of a relationship with God.
2. To Jesus, particularly illustrated in this parable, God is actively seeking his children, trying to lead them back to himself.
    - a. When Jesus confronts these questions with his audience, probably the Scribes and Pharisees, he concludes that God is like a shepherd.
    - b. He “risks his life” for his sheep.
  3. Notice Lk. 15:7. Jesus may have made the statement, “There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”
    - a. Jesus may have made this statement as a condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees who considered themselves righteous, and consequently did not believe they needed to repent of anything.
    - b. What is it to be self-righteous?

## II. The Parable of the Lost Coin. 15:8-10

- A. The coin may have been lost because of the negligence of the woman whereas the lost sheep apparently wandered away.
  1. These have been called twin parables.
  2. Possibly the ten coins spoken of were the headdress of coins.
    - a. Barclay speaks of this. “Every Jewish girl scraped and saved until she had ten silver pieces. She then got these pieces strung together in the form of a chain which was worn as a necklace or a headdress.” William Barclay, *And Jesus Said*, p. 173.
    - b. To loose one of these would be considered a major loss.
  3. It may also be that the coin represented a significant portion of the total worth of the woman.
    - a. She swept and searched the house to find the coin.
    - b. When she found it she told her friends and they all rejoiced with her.
- B. Jesus says, “There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

## III. The Parable of the Lost Son.

A. This parable describes the assertion of self-will, in the presence of the problem of self-righteousness.

1. The younger son said, "Give me my share of the estate." Home was a bore to him. He wanted excitement.
2. He craved freedom without restraint. To the younger son, home rules and discipline got in the way to an exciting life.
  - a. An unwritten lie about life that attracts many young people, both then and now, is, "You can have liberty and freedom to live as you want, without the restraint of law."
  - b. License to live as one wants to live, without restraints, is not freedom, it is slavery.
  - c. Moral freedom always has limits. There is a moral law in this universe. Simply denying that fact does not eliminate it.
  - d. The basic moral law is, "What we sow we will reap," and try as we may, we cannot escape it.

B. "He set off for a distant country and there he squandered his wealth in wild living."

1. Consider the excellent prospects for "setting off for a distant country." (Many have done this.)
2. Consider the implications of "he squandered his wealth in wild living."
  - a. What constitutes "wild living"?
  - b. What does this adage mean? "I may kill tomorrow by the abuses of today."
  - c. How do you react to these two statements?
    - 1) Constant gratification of one's own desires is not the exercise of freedom, but the acknowledgement of one's enslavement to one's own desires.
    - 2) "The man who lives to do as he likes becomes the slave of his likes."

George A. Buttrick, *Parables of Jesus*, p. 191

C. The famine.

1. Not only did this deprive him of needed sustenance, but also it was a reminder of his own moral bankruptcy.
2. A farmer had pigs, the worst of the unclean animals to the Jews, and he sent the young man to feed the pigs.
  - a. Where had happened to his freedom?
  - b. Where were his friends?

- c. He was once a radiant young man who had money to spare. Now he is in want, destitute, and friendless, and “no one gave him anything.”

3. “He came to his senses.”

- a. Reflection on his old home life.
- b. In this part of the parable Jesus is painting a picture of the seriousness and consequences of sin.

D. The return home.

1. His speech. “Make me like one of your hired men.”

- a. Notice the difference in attitude.
- b. What had changed at home? Nothing. However his *perception* of home with its discipline and regulations had changed.
- c. For the first time he began to realize the necessity of discipline in his personal life. Only when this is realized and accepted can one know the meaning of freedom, happiness, and love.

2. Picture him at the halfway point going from home contrasted with the halfway point when he was returning home.

3. The greeting of his father.

E. The elder brother.

- 1. In the parable, the elder brother represents the Scribes and Pharisees.
- 2. Compare the response of the elder brother with the attitudes of the Scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking.
  - a. A feeling that “we are better than the sinners.”
  - b. An evaluation of sin. “The other person’s sins are terrible, while mine, if I have any, are only minor.”
  - c. “Sins of passion have darkly crowned the list [of sins]; whereas jealousy, anger, pride, and harsh judgment have hardly been counted sins. They are faults, rather; they are unfortunate defects of temper.” Buttrick, p. 197.
  - d. But Jesus said to the self-righteous Pharisees, “The tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.” Matt. 21:31
  - e. The older son had no real love for his own brother, but only arrogance and pride in his own rightness. To his father, the elder brother said, “All these years I have been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.” (Never?)

Conclusion:

- 1. In these three parables Jesus illustrates God’s willingness to seek the lost.



**Chapter XXV**  
**Jesus at the Grave of Lazarus**  
John 10:40—11:53

Introduction:

1. Except for his entry into Jerusalem, and the events of his last week, Jesus' public ministry has come to an end.
2. He no longer teaches openly except in the temple precincts as shown in Matt. 21-23.
3. In the events and dialogue of John 11, we see many of the goals John stated in his prologue come to a climax.
4. John is the only one of the Gospel writers who records the raising of Lazarus. The question arises, "Why did the other Gospel writers not record such an important event?"

I. Some preliminary observations on the events of this chapter.

A. The final rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders.

1. As far back as Jn. 5:16-18 John tells us that the Jewish leaders were determined to kill Jesus.
  - a. On the Sabbath day he had healed the lame man at the pool of Bethesda and then made the claim that God was "my Father."
  - b. In Lk. 4:28-30, after speaking in the Synagogue, the people of Nazareth were offended at him, and tried to throw him down the cliff.
2. Most of the miracles recorded by John evoked a dialogue with the Jews.
  - a. In the story of the raising of Lazarus there is only a short dialogue, and it takes place prior to the miracle.
  - b. This may be because this was a semi-private affair, and Jesus was in a friendly atmosphere rather than one of hostility.
3. Compare the following miracle stories.
  - a. John 5, the healing at the Pool of Bethesda.
  - b. John 6, the feeding of the 5,000.
  - c. John 9, the healing of the blind man.

B. Verses 54-57 form a sort of epilogue to the close of Jesus' public ministry as recorded in John's Gospel.

1. The writer of this Gospel now turns to the conclusion of Jesus' life – the crucifixion, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances.
2. This story, with its events and dialogues, is filled with paradoxes and phrases with double meanings, and seeming contradictions. Each of these serves John's final purpose in unique ways.

## II. The news of Lazarus' illness.

### A. The message. Jn. 11:1-16.

1. In the statement "the one you love is sick," the Greek word **φιλεω** (*phileō*) is used here for "love" rather than the word **αγαπαω** (*agapaō*).
  - a. **φιλεω** (*phileō*) usually carries a more brotherly love, passionate, or personal family love than **αγαπαω**, (*agapaō*) which deals more strongly with the will than with the emotions.
  - b. Neither of these words carries the sexual connotations of **ερος** (*eros*), which is not used in the New Testament.
  - c. In verse 5 the word **αγαπαω** (*agapaō*) is used, referring to Jesus' love for the Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
2. Some have thought that this might indicate that Lazarus was actually the one who was "the beloved disciple" rather than John. However, this identification is not generally accepted, and most scholars believe that John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

### B. Jesus' reaction to the message.

1. Jesus remained where he was for two more days. Nothing is said about why Jesus waited, and this has given rise to some speculation.
  - a. Might Jesus have had conflicting priorities at this time?
    - 1) He may have been in the midst of a very effective ministry, and felt that that ministry needed to be completed.
    - 2) Do we have conflicting priorities in our lives?
    - 3) What might be some of these conflicting priorities? How do we resolve them?
  - b. Some say Jesus wanted to wait so that Lazarus would die, and the people could witness the miracle of his resurrection.
  - c. Some say it was in order that four days pass before the miracle took place.
    - 1) The Jews had a tradition which said that the spirit of the deceased would hover around a grave with the possibility that death could be re-

versed. By the fourth day, the body began to decay, and the belief was that the spirit of the deceased departed at that time.

- 2) This practice may have grown up because a body may go through a swooning which could be mistaken for death.
- d. Some say he delayed so that there would be no misunderstanding about his going to Jerusalem of his own accord, for he knew that the cross awaited him.
2. Vs. 11. Jesus said, “Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I’m going there to wake him up.”
  - a. Once again Jesus used a literary device which is common in John. He says something which sounds simple, but it leads to a profound truth through discussion.
  - b. Jesus explained that Lazarus had died.
3. The death of Lazarus.
  - a. In 11:4 Jesus stated that Lazarus’ sickness was not unto death, and in verse 14 he acknowledged his death.
  - b. There is an unusual Greek construction here, which occurs only here and in I John 5:16 where John speaks of a person committing a “sin leading to death.”
    - 1) The Greek is **προς θανατον**, (*pros thananton*) and when used with the accusative case (as here) means to move toward.
    - 2) In this passage, one might expect the word **εις** (*eis*) which carries the idea of “resulting in.” This is used in Acts 2:38, “repent and be baptized, *resulting in* remission of sins.”
    - 3) In the LXX, when Hezekiah was “sick unto death” **εις** is used (II Kgs. 20:1).
    - 4) The text in John means that death is not the final result in this case. But if he had used **εις** it would mean that death was, in fact the final issue.
4. Jesus adds that Lazarus’s death occurred so that God’s son may be glorified.
5. In the Gospel of John the glorification of the Son is frequently mentioned. He uses this word about 18 times, and it usually refers to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

#### C. The reaction of the disciples.

1. The disciples were afraid for Jesus to go back to the environs of Jerusalem because they thought he would be killed, knowing that there were hostile political and religious forces at work against him.

2. Thomas said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”
  - a. It is interesting that Thomas (the “doubter” as he is called) was the one who said this. He showed himself to be a man of loyalty and courage.
  - b. All of the apostles seemed to have gone along with this, and seemingly expected Jesus to die, yet they had a difficult time accepting the reality of the trial and crucifixion when it finally happened.

### III. Jesus’ arrival at Bethany.

#### A. Burial practices among the ancient Palestinian Jews.

1. They did not practice embalming as we know it, nor as the Egyptians had practiced it.
2. Bodies were usually buried rather quickly after death because of the early onset of decay.
3. The body was bathed in expensive spices and ointments, and frequently the deceased was clothed in expensive robes or other garments.
  - a. Rabbi Gamaliel II, c. A.D.100, requested that he be buried in a very simple way without expensive spices and robes.
  - b. Gamaliel’s request, for the most part, brought an end to expensive funerals among the Jews of that era.

#### B. Jesus and the sisters.

1. Martha.
  - a. She was the first to meet Jesus. Luke 10:38-42 speaks of Martha as a woman of action . . . she was preparing dinner while Mary sat at Jesus’ feet.
  - b. Notice that she spoke with regret, as did Mary when she spoke to Jesus.
    - 1) “If you had been here.” Jesus had delayed coming to Bethany when he heard of the sickness of Lazarus. Might Martha have had in her heart, “When you received our message, why did it take you so long to get here?”
    - 2) She also spoke in hope. “God will give you whatever you ask.”
  - c. Jesus’ reply was “Your brother will rise again.”
  - d. Martha’s response shows that she believed in the resurrection at the last day.
    - 1) This was a controversy among the Jews. The Pharisees believed in a resurrection, but the Sadducees did not.

- 2) There is almost nothing in the Old Testament which speaks of immortality or life after death.
  - 3) Jews today, generally, do not believe in a life after death. This has led to a great deal of speculation among some Jews, particularly concerning the nature of "Sheol," which used to be mistakenly translated "hell" and "grave" in the Old Testament.
  - 4) It was thought of as a shadowy existence, somewhat like sleeping. The word is sometimes used to speak simply of death itself.
  - 5) I Sam. 28:14. This passage speaks of the "witch" (necromancer) of Endor bringing Samuel up from the dead as a sort of ghostly figure. He is described as "an old man wearing a robe," who asked Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"
  - 6) Ps. 16:9-11, quoted in Acts 2:26-27, gives the other side of this. David prophesied, "My body will also live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay."
- e. This is significant in John, because in his Gospel Jesus speaks of eternal life much more than in the Synoptics. Jesus uses this expression sixteen times, whereas the Synoptics he uses it a total of ten times, three of which are repeats of the same events.
2. Vss. 25-26. Jesus' response to Martha. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me shall live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"
- a. Concerning this statement, Barclay says, "It is not possible that even a lifetime's thinking should reveal the full meaning of this; but we must try to grasp as much of its meaning as we can." (William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, p. 108.)
  - b. Here, in the face of physical death, Jesus gives hope of eternal life, stating that those who believe and live accordingly shall never die.
    - 1) If we look carefully we will see a veiled contrast between this statement, and God's statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden: "You will surely die." Gen. 3:3.
    - 2) The blessings of forgiveness can never be appreciated until the seriousness of sin is recognized and accepted. Forgiveness is the way Jesus brings men and women back from spiritual death to spiritual life.
3. Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus.
- a. Jn 11:33. The translation says "he was deeply moved." The ASV translates it, "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled."
    - 1) The Greek word **εμβριμμαι** (*embrimomai*) is difficult to translate. It means to be troubled, or to strictly charge some one, or to be agitated.

- 2) This word occurs only in the Gospels.
    - a) In Matt. 9:30, after healing a blind man and a mute, Jesus “*warned* them sternly, ‘See that no one knows about this.’”
    - b) In Mk. 1:43, Jesus sent the crowd away after healing a leper saying “with a *strong warning*: ‘See that you don’t tell this to anyone.’”
    - c) In Mk. 14:5, Jesus was dining at the house of Simon the Leper, and was anointed by a woman. The disciples “rebuked her *harshly*.”
  - 3) It can also be translated as angry or chafed, and sometimes in classical Greek literature it refers to a horse snorting.
  - 4) Through each of these there is the expression of very strong emotions that stir a person to his very soul.
- b. This story, as none other, shows the depth of humanity of Jesus. In verse 35 it says, “Jesus wept.”
  - c. Heb. 2:17, 4:15. These passages say he was made like us in every way, and that he was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.
  - d. Vs. 37. “Could not he, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man from dying?” (Was this a question of confusion and wonderment, or was it a sarcastic question, evidence of hostility of some of the bystanders?)
3. Vss. 38-42. Jesus’ prayer.
    - a. This very simple prayer is spoken by Jesus because he wanted the crowd to hear what he said to the Father.
    - b. In the prayer, John shows that Jesus persists in emphasizing the fact that his mission was directly from God.

### C. The raising of Lazarus.

1. Liberal theologians have a great deal of trouble believing in the historicity of this event. Some believe:
  - a. It was a legend which John included in order to emphasize the teaching of Jesus on eternal life and final resurrection of the dead. This is partially based on the fact that the Synoptics do not mention this spectacular event.
  - b. Others believe it was John’s own embellishment.
  - c. Some believe that Lazarus was in a coma, and he came out of it at this time.
  - d. A French scholar, Ernest Renan (1823-1892), wrote *The Life of Jesus*. He believed that almost everything spoken about Jesus was only legend, and he once believed this entire event was contrived by Mary, Martha, Jesus, and Lazarus, and that Lazarus never died. He later abandoned this theory, but his writings had a profound effect on 19<sup>th</sup> century theology. Some of

Renan's colleagues believed that some of his statements border on atheism.

- e. Some hold this to be a sort of allegory or "parable" designed to teach a lesson about Jesus' simple statement, "I am the resurrection and the life."
  - f. Others link it to the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 where the rich man was told that even if one was raised from the dead people would not believe.
2. The raising of the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain both took place almost immediately after their "death," giving rise to the theory that each was in a coma or trance, and Jesus brought them out of this condition rather than a true resurrection.
  3. Quotation from Wilbert F. Howard of Handsworth College, Birmingham, England: "The difference between revival immediately after death, and resurrection after four days, is so great as to raise doubts about the historicity of this story, especially in view of the unimaginable details in vs. 44." (*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8, *The Gospel of John*. Abingdon Press: New York, 1952, pp. 648-649.)
  4. These items are included here in order to give us an idea of where a great deal of modern Biblical scholarship stands.

#### IV. Jn. 11:45-53. The aftermath.

##### A. The division among the people.

1. Many of the Jews who had come to Mary and Martha "put their faith in him [Jesus]."
2. On the other hand, "But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done." John inserts the word "but" in order to contrast the responses of the witnesses.
  - a. Jesus' opponents did not accuse him of fraud or trickery. They affirmed that he had done many miraculous signs.
  - b. A meeting of the Sanhedrin was called by the chief priests and Pharisees.
    - 1) The Sanhedrin was made up of 70 men, some Pharisees but mostly Sadducees. The priests during this period were usually Sadducees.
    - 2) The Pharisees were a strictly religious party, while the Sadducees were very political. They agreed however that their positions were being threatened by the popularity of Jesus.
    - 3) Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were both members of the Sanhedrin. See Lk. 23:50-51 and Jn. 3:1.

##### B. The action of the Sanhedrin.

1. Although there are earlier references to the desire of the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus, this is the beginning of a specific determination and planning to do so.
2. How do you link this passage to religious bias and prejudice?
  - a. In Acts 4:16. The same Sanhedrin had a similar thing to say about the apostles.
  - b. Did they believe that by killing Jesus they would stop this movement which threatened their position?
3. The intensity of their discussion.
  - a. Caiaphas, “who was High Priest that year” denounced the others by saying “you know nothing at all.”
  - b. Under the Law of Moses, the High Priesthood held his position for life, but under the domination of Rome the High Priest served at the pleasure of Rome. A number of times high priests were deposed by Roman officials. This apparently had taken place in this situation. Annas and Caiaphas are both spoken of as being High Priest. Jesus stood trial before both of them.
  - c. Josephus refers to the Sadducees as being rude, and rough in their actions with others. Josephus himself was a Pharisee.
4. Jn. 11:48. They said, “The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”
  - a. No doubt they misunderstood Jesus’ mission, thinking that he was a political figure or one who would lead a revolution.
  - b. This would have resulted in Rome suppressing such an insurrection, and probably the removal of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council.
  - c. There may be a bit of irony in this passage, because John wrote this about 20 years after the destruction of Jerusalem. That event took place in A.D. 70. The position and power of the Sanhedrin, and nation of Israel itself were taken away.

#### C. The prophecy of Caiaphas.

1. Jn. 11:49-53. “You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”
2. This prophecy did not come from Caiaphas alone, but was a divinely directed statement. In effect, he said, “It is better for this one man to die to save our nation from the wrath of Rome, than for us to leave him alone, and risk a rebellion, and the complete destruction of our nation, and loss of our own position.”
3. John places a number of his own explanations throughout his Gospel.
4. Vs. 53. “So from that day on they plotted to take his life.” The Synoptics do not mention this as a motivational element in the death of Jesus.



Conclusion:

1. Aside from the resurrection of Christ himself, this is the most spectacular miracle in the New Testament.
2. This story gives us an excellent picture of the humanity and the divinity of Jesus.

## **Chapter XXVI**

### **Beginning of Jesus' Final Week**

John 11:54—12:50

#### Introduction:

1. With the resurrection of Lazarus, the Jewish leaders decided Jesus should be arrested and killed. See 11:53.
  2. Jn. 11:54-57. John says, for all practical purposes, Jesus' public ministry was brought to a close with the raising of Lazarus.
    - a. 11:54. He "no longer moved about publicly among the Jews."
    - b. However, after the triumphal entry the Synoptics speak of his daily encounters with the Jews and some of the religious leaders in the temple area. See Matt. 21-25.
  3. He withdrew to a region near a village called Ephraim where he and the disciples stayed. Ephraim, also known as Ophra, was a small town about 15 miles north and slightly east of Jerusalem.
  4. By this time the religious leaders had labeled Jesus as an outlaw. He remained in Ephraim until a few days before the Passover.
  5. 11:55. The Jews frequently came to the Passover early so they could go through the cleansing rituals, and make other preparations for observing the Feast.
    - a. The fame of Jesus had spread all over, and many wondered if this might be the time when he would manifest himself to Israel. Some probably wondered if he would show himself as their king or Messiah.
    - b. The chief priests and Pharisees had given orders to have him turned in if any one saw him.
- I. The anointing at Bethany. 12:1-11.
- A. See the attached chart concerning the various anointings.
1. Both Luke and John mention Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in parts of their Gospels, but Matthew and Mark do not specifically identify any of them.
  2. The anointing at the home of Simon the leper in Bethany, mentioned by Matthew and Mark (where the woman is not identified by name), took place late in the ministry of Jesus, as did the anointing in John. Each of these is mentioned as having taken place in Bethany, but there are differences between John's account and that of Matthew and Mark. The anointing in Luke took place early in Jesus' ministry.
  3. In Luke's account of the anointing at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Lk. 7:36-50), the woman is known in the city as a "sinner." This obviously does

not fit the description of Mary of Bethany. In addition, that setting is in Galilee, not Bethany.

4. The anointing spoken of in Matthew and Mark was on Jesus' head, but the anointing in John was on his feet. It is interesting that the anointing in Luke (early in Christ's ministry, and in Galilee), was on his feet also. Some scholars object to the idea of his feet being anointed because this was not customary among the Jews.
5. John 11:2 mentions that Mary anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair, but the story of that anointing is not told until chapter 12. This means that John mentions the anointing (11:2) before he actually tells the story (12:1-8).
  - a. Luke and John are the only Gospels which tell of an anointing of Jesus' feet.
  - b. Luke records an anointing which took place in Galilee at the house of Simon the Pharisee. This was early in Jesus' ministry (Lk. 7:36-50). John's account of an anointing took place just before the crucifixion, in Bethany, at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (Jn. 12:1-11). In Luke he is anointed by a "sinful woman," but in John by Mary, a righteous woman. This indicates that they are two different incidents. The unusual part is that in both of these anointings Jesus' feet were anointed rather than his head.
6. Based on certain pseudepigraphic writings, the popular book and movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, says that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. This is a fictitious story with no historical foundation at all.
7. Matt. 28:1 identifies Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" bringing spices to the tomb on the morning of the resurrection. The "other Mary" may have been Mary the mother of James (see Matt. 27:56, Lk. 24:10), Mary the wife of Clopas (See Jn. 19:25), or Mary the sister of Martha. None of these identifications can be definite.
8. See chart on the following page.

<b>The Anointings of Jesus</b>				
	<b>Late Ministry Matthew</b>	<b>Late Ministry Mark</b>	<b>Early Ministry Luke</b>	<b>Late Ministry John</b>
	<b>26:6-13</b>	<b>14:1-9</b>	<b>7:36-50</b>	<b>12:1-8 (11:2)</b>
<b>City</b>	Bethany, near Jerusalem	Bethany, near Jerusalem	Probably in Galilee. In 7:11 Jesus was in Nain	Bethany, near Jerusalem, at a dinner in honor of Jesus
<b>Who</b>	"A woman," not identified	"A woman" not identified	"A woman" identified as a known sinner	Mary is identified as the sister of Lazarus and Martha
<b>Place in the city</b>	Home of Simon the Leper	Home of Simon the Leper	Home of a Pharisee	Home, possibly of Mary, Martha, Lazarus or the home of Simon the Leper
<b>What was anointed?</b>	Anointed his head	Anointed his head	Anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair	Anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair
<b>Why</b>	To prepare my body for burial	To prepare my body for burial	No reason given.	To prepare my body for burial
<b>When</b>	Late in his ministry, just before events in the upper room.	Late in his ministry, just before events in the upper room	Fairly early in his ministry.	Late in his ministry, just before events in the upper room.
<b>Objections</b>	The disciples objected	Some of those Present objected	The Pharisee objected because the woman was a sinner	Judas objected. No mention of others who may have objected

B. A plan to destroy the evidence. 12:9-11

1. This block of Scripture shows the power of prejudice and jealousy.
  - a. Look at Saul's conduct against David in I Samuel.
  - b. Why do jealousy and prejudice have such power over us?
  - c. What can we do to overcome these evils?

2. The Synoptics, since they do not mention the raising of Lazarus, do not include the discussion within the Sanhedrin concerning their plot to kill Jesus.
- II. Jn. 12:12-19. The Triumphal Entry. See also Mt. 21:1-11, Mk. 11:1-10, and Lk. 19:29-38.

A. Some of the differences.

1. The Synoptics give details about finding the donkey, etc. John does not mention this.
2. Matthew and John both quote statements from Zech. 9:9 and Ps.118:26 as prophecies of this event, but Mark and Luke do not mention them.
  - a. What was the context of the statement in Zechariah?
  - b. Matthew might have included this to show that, just as Zechariah speaks of a man of peace reentering Jerusalem, Jesus also was a man of peace, not a warring king.
  - c. Zechariah had just spoken of how the Philistine and Syrian cities would crumble, and “your king” (the leader of Israel), would come into the city in peace.
    - a. Israel had no king at the time of Zechariah since he wrote after the Babylonian captivity.
    - b. There is much controversy concerning the date and authorship of Zech 9-14. Some liberal scholars argue that these chapters in Zechariah were written about the time of Alexander the Great.
    - c. Think in terms of the audience to which Matthew was writing and the purpose of his writing.
3. In Luke, the Jews challenged Jesus to quiet the crowd. Notice his reply. See Lk. 19:39-40.
4. The word Hosanna means “save us” or “save us now.” Matthew tells us that the crowd shouted “Hosanna to the son of David” meaning “Save us now to the Son of David.”
  - a. This statement is reminiscent of Ps. 118:25-26 where the Psalmist says, “O Lord, save us; O Lord grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.”
  - b. This psalm was the last one in a group of psalms customarily sung by the Jews at the time of the Passover. They referred to them as the *Hallel Psalms*.
  - c. Some commentators believe that Psalm 118 may have been written to commemorate the completion of the walls in the days of Nehemiah, since they considered that event to be a great victory for the Jews. See Neh. 6:16.

- d. This expression was also thought of as a statement of a conqueror, and was shouted by the crowd when Simon Maccabeus (the brother of Judas Maccabeus) returned from the liberation of Accra from the Syrians in 141 B.C. See I Macc. 13:51 where this is described. Simon decreed that this event be celebrated annually. Accra is located about 10 miles north of modern day Haifa (Mt. Carmel).
- e. These things show that the custom of entering Jerusalem with celebration, palm branches, etc. was not unusual for the Jews.

B. The significance of the Triumphal Entry.

1. The size of the crowd at the Passover.

- a. Passover was one of the three annual feasts which attracted the greatest number of Jews.
- b. Josephus speaks of a census ordered by Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria just before the outbreak of the Jewish revolt in A.D. 68-70. He said that the number taking part in the Passover Feast was about 2,700,000.
- c. Barclay says a census was taken concerning the number of lambs offered at that time. The total was 256,500. There had to be a minimum of ten people for each lamb, so the estimate was that there may have been as many as 2,700,000 people at the Passover when that census was taken.
- d. This may be an exaggeration by Josephus, but it does indicate that there were many people in Jerusalem at that time.

2. The crowd was divided, some favoring Jesus, and others who wanted to silence him.

- a. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem infuriated the religious leaders, and they told him to silence the people. See Lk. 19:39-40.
- b. Notice Jesus' reply.
- c. Some in the crowd were curious to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. For this reason, some in the Jewish council wanted to kill Lazarus as well.

3. What was the crowd's reaction?

- a. John mentions that the disciples didn't understand the significance of these events until after Jesus was glorified (12:16). They did not see this as the Messianic fulfillment of Zech. 9:9.
- b. Did the crowd realize what was going on? In 12:13 they proclaimed, "Blessed is the king of Israel," but Israel had no king at that time.
- c. Jn. 6:15. Remember however, that the crowds tried to take Jesus by force and make him king.

- d. No doubt, John was referring to the fact that the disciples did not understand the true kingship of Jesus. The crowd seems to have thought of him as a political ruler and deliverer.
- 4. Why did the crowd affirm Jesus the way it did?
  - a. Some believe this was Jesus' open affirmation of his Messiahship, while others see it in a more spontaneous light as coming directly from the enthusiasm of the people.
  - b. John affirms the enthusiasm of the part of the crowd which knew of the resurrection of Lazarus. See 12:17-19.
- 5. By this time Jesus was considered an outlaw, and the people had been instructed to turn him over to the Sanhedrin. They had already decided to kill him.
- 6. Jn. 12:16 indicates that the disciples did not understand the significance of the events until after his resurrection.
- 7. Jn. 12:19. "So the Pharisees said to one another, 'See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him.'"

#### C. Cleansing the temple.

- 1. John tells of the cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry while the Synoptics tell of it after the triumphal entry, near the end of his ministry. See Jn. 2:12-17 and Matt. 21:12-17.
- 2. Were these separate incidents?
  - a. In the Synoptics Jesus cleanses the temple just after the Triumphal Entry, and his authority was challenged. He answers with a dilemma concerning John the Baptist.
  - b. In John, the cleansing took place at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. His authority was challenged, and his answer was, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days."
  - c. These appear to have been two separate incidents.

### III. The Greeks who wanted to see Jesus, and the paradox of his death. Jn. 12:20-36.

#### A. Who were these Greeks?

- 1. The Synoptics do not speak of this incident.
- 2. Since John was writing to the Greek people, this would have been of particular interest to them.
- 3. These may not have been Greeks by nationality, because this is the general word use for anyone who was not a Jew. The Athenians had a reputation for being wanderers, and some of them may have been in Jerusalem for the celebration.

4. Probably the cleansing of the temple, spoken of by the Synoptic writers had already taken place when the Greeks made their request. They may have seen the triumphal entry, and the cleansing of the temple also. Their request may not have been theological, but a matter of general interest.
- B. Jesus replied by saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”
1. Perhaps those who heard this thought of the accession of Jesus as King.
  2. John seems to treat the expression, “Son of Man” as a combination of humanity and divinity, perhaps looking back to the passage in Daniel 7:13.
    - a. The paradox of suffering and glorification.
    - b. What is a paradox? Jesus frequently used paradox.
      - a. Finding one’s life vs. losing one’s life. We can try to hoard life, and lose it.
      - b. The humble will be exalted.
      - c. The last shall be first.
  5. Contrast the expectations of the Jews with the reality of Jesus’ statement.
    - a. He said the “Son of Man is to be glorified.”
    - b. The seed must die before it can reproduce, so Jesus must die in order to bring blessings to mankind.
    - c. How do you think the world generally looks at the death of Jesus?
      - 1) Is he a “martyr”?
      - 2) Is he a man convinced of the rightness of his message, but rejected by the crowd?
      - 3) Is he a redeemer?
  6. How might my concept of the death of Christ affect my view of the Christian life?
    - a. Today, there are many attacks on Christianity, and it is ridiculed by the entertainment industry and the media. What do you believe is a major cause of this?
    - b. How can Christians overcome this?
    - c. What is it to be “dead to the world” and “alive unto God?”
    - d. I Pet. 3:9-12. “Whoever would love life and see good days . . .”
    - e. William Barclay said, “We have only to think of what this world would have lost if there had been no men who were not prepared to forget their personal safety, to forget security, to forget selfish gain and selfish advancement. The world owes everything to people who recklessly spent their strength and gave themselves to God and to others.” (William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of John*, pp. 144-145.)



7. Most people look at success in life as the right to rule, to be part of “upper management,” or to be served by others.
    - a. Jesus looked at success as the willingness to sacrifice, learning to love all people, and the desire to serve God and others.
    - b. This is an extremely difficult lesson for us to learn.
  8. Jesus’ idea of glorification was inseparably linked to the cross.
- C. Jesus predicts his death. 12:27-37.
1. God answered Jesus prayer by a voice from heaven, but the voice was for the benefit of the crowd.
  2. Notice the tension contrasted with Christ’s sense of mission.
    - a. He was troubled and asked himself the question, “What shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason that I came to this hour.”
    - b. 12:32. “When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all men to myself.”
  3. The crowd’s response.
    - a. The Law said that the Christ remains forever. Various Old Testament passages alluded to this such as:
      - 1) Dan. 7:14. “His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never pass away.”
      - 2) Ezek. 37:25. “And David my servant will be their prince forever.”
    - b. These people had a confused idea of the kingdom and the mission of the Messiah.
    - c. Just as kingdoms and empires rise and melt away, so will we be if we fail to see that the life which lasts and influences history is not one of conquest, wealth, or power but one of love, sacrifice, and of death to self.
    - d. In our own lifetime we have seen Hitler try to conquer the world, but he was a signal failure. Yet, Jesus, with love, sacrifice, and death has had a more lasting influence on the world than any conqueror in history.
    - e. This is the paradox of the cross.

#### IV. 12:37-50. The blindness and tragedy of unbelief.

- A. The Jewish religious leaders rejected Christ even after all of the signs.
1. John is befuddled by this question, and seems to have no logical answer. He feels that Isaiah 53 best expressed his own feelings of frustration, so he turns to the history of Israel and to Isaiah.

- a. Is. 53:1-2, the Song of the Suffering Servant.
- b. There is no Jewish literature which indicates that they ever applied this to the Messiah.
- c. We still don't know just who Isaiah was speaking of in the historical context, but it is applied to Jesus' suffering in the New Testament.
  - 1) It is interesting to notice that in Is. 53 the Servant is suffering for the sins of the people.
  - 2) Also, he says that the healing of the wounds of the sins of the people comes from the servant.
  - 3) God accepts the suffering of the Servant.
- d. To us, all of this seems evident, but the Israelites could not conceive of their Messiah suffering.
- e. "Who has believed our message?"
  - 1) The message had, and has, almost inconceivable power, yet it goes unheeded.
  - 2) John could have given all of the answers we give – desire for power, religious prejudice, preconceptions about what the Messiah should be or how God should act, etc., but John's problem seems to be, how could anyone allow these things to displace the promise of the life which now is, and that which is to come.
  - 3) Notice however, that we and our culture are guilty of some of the same attitudes, as those demonstrated in the text, although these attitudes might manifest themselves a little differently in our culture.

B. A closer look at Isaiah 6:9-10 as quoted by John.

- 1. This passage is also quoted by Jesus after he gave the Parable of the Sower, Matt. 13:11-17, and by Paul in Acts 28:26 to describe the close mindedness of the unbelieving Jews.
- 2. This brings up the question of one's predisposition toward truth, wherever one may find it, and how it may change some of our basic concepts and beliefs. These questions are not theoretical or simply philosophical or theological. They are very practical.
  - a. What is my personal responsibility in searching for truth?
  - b. Does God himself ever shut up a person's heart so that he will not believe?
  - c. What is hardness of heart, and how does it come?
  - d. What about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart? Before Moses ever appeared before Pharaoh, God told Moses that he (God) would harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the people go. Ex. 4:21.
  - e. What is the meaning of II Thess. 2:10b-12 where Paul says, "God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all

will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”

- f. Is it ever too late for a person to change his mind about something? (If I jump off of a cliff, the law of gravity takes charge of my destination, and my choice is irreversible. Is that ever possible in the spiritual realm?)
- g. Does God ever use the unbelief of mankind to accomplish his (God’s) own purposes?

C. 12:42-43. The faith of a coward.

1. Notice that among the leaders, many believed on him, but were cowardly, and would not confess their faith.
2. Barclay says, “These people were seeking to carry out the impossible policy: they were trying to be secret disciples. It has been said, and said truthfully that secret discipleship is a contradiction in terms for, ‘either the secrecy kills the discipleship, or the discipleship kills the secrecy.’” (William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, p. 155.)
3. What were they afraid to loose?
4. What was their motivation to remain secret believers? Note the pursuit of celebrity, popularity, or approval of others. What part does this play in our world and culture?
5. What was John’s diagnosis of their problem?

D. Jesus gives a warning.

1. John goes back to some of the encounters Jesus had with the Jews concerning his relationship to the Father.
  - a. Jn. 12:44. He was sent by God. See also Jn. 4:34-35, “‘My food,’ said Jesus ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.’”
  - b. Jn. 12:46. “I have come into the world as light.” See also Jn. 1:5-9, 3:19-20, etc.
  - c. Jn. 12:47. Jesus did not come to the world to condemn, but to save. See also Jn. 3:16-17.
  - d. Jn. 12:48. Jesus speaks of his words condemning men at the last day. See also Jn. 5:24, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”
  - e. Jn. 12:49. Jesus says he only speaks what the Father has told him. See also Jn. 8:28-29. “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”
2. The two main aspects of the Christian message.
  - a. The person of Jesus Christ. Who exactly is he?

- 1) Jn. 1:14 and 14:8-10. It is through Jesus Christ that we come to know just who God is. Jesus is God in the flesh.
- 2) Jn. 5:16-19. "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." Jesus claimed no independent authority, but related all of his authority to the Father. He affirmed that all of his works were really the works of the Father.
- 3) This was very fundamental for the Jews to hear because they considered Jesus' work to be out of harmony with God. Jesus had "violated" the Sabbath by healing the paralyzed man at the pool and other by deeds as well.

b. The teaching of Jesus. What is the essence of the Christian message?

- 1) Jn. 12:40-43. Jesus places great responsibility on the hearer of the message. There are dire consequences associated with religious close-mindedness.
- 2) Jn. 12:47-50. Acceptance of the person of Jesus is the exercise of faith. This involves not just a propositional belief, but obedience as well. That will be part of the test on judgment day.
- 3) Jn. 12:50. This passage closes with the strong affirmation that the words of Jesus are the words of the Father. Don't trifle with them. Trifle is defined as "to treat someone or something as unimportant."
- 4) With this statement, John concludes the public ministry of Jesus.

Conclusion:

1. As we come to the close of Jesus' ministry, John begins to summarize its significance for us.
2. He concludes chapter 12 by referring to the unbelief of the Jews. Why did they not believe him?
3. Go back and read 12:37-43. What does this mean?

## **Chapter XXVII**

### **Return to Jerusalem**

### **Questions and Responses**

#### Introduction:

1. These events begin the last week of the life of Jesus.
2. Notice that more detail is given to these events than to any similar period of Jesus' life except for the Sermon on the Mount. Why?
3. Jesus' dialogue with his opposition became more confrontational at this time.
4. None of the events of Matthew 21:12—25:46 are mentioned in John's Gospel.

#### I. The beginning of confrontations.

##### A. Cleansing the temple. Matt. 21:12-13.

1. Note the similarity with that of John 2:12-19.
2. Some have concluded that these two accounts may have referred to the same incident, but that John places it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry while the Synoptics place it at the end.
3. Notice the miracles which were done in the temple area at this time. They seem to have been ignored by the religious leaders, but see John 11:45-48.

##### B. The questions concerning authority. Matt. 21:23-27.

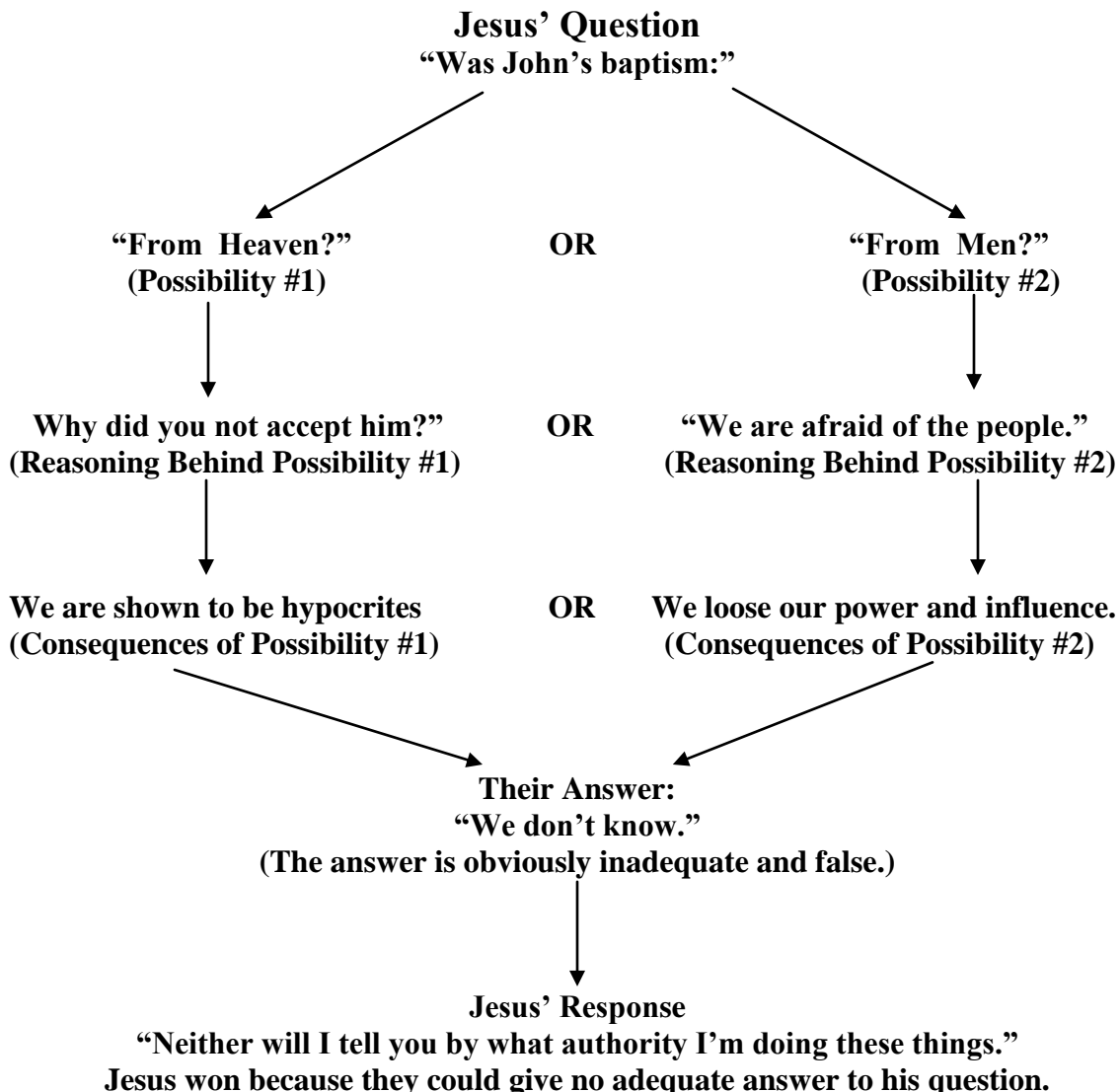
1. "By what authority are you doing these things and who gave you this authority?" Jesus' response was in the form of a question. He presented them with a dilemma. The chart on the following page illustrates the effective use of the dilemma.

## Jesus' Use of the Dilemma

Matt.21:23-27

The authority of Jesus was challenged when the chief priests and elders asked, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Instead of answering their question, Jesus presented them with a dilemma.

What is a dilemma? Although a dilemma is generally thought of as the choice between two or more unacceptable ideas, in its pure form it is somewhat different from this. Jesus uses it here in its purest form. In argumentation and debate, a dilemma is a form of argument in which the opponent is given only two possible alternatives, both of which are undesirable for the opposition. If the opponent is given more than two alternatives, it is not a pure dilemma, and will probably not be as effective. These two alternative must be absolute (yes or no, either or, right or wrong, etc.), and they must both be based on truth with no possibility of augmentation or modification. Look at how Jesus used this device.



2. Notice how effectively Jesus used this device.
    - a. Jesus included only two possible answers to his question, both of which were indisputable and completely unacceptable to his opponents. There was not a third possibility.
    - b. Either answer chosen by his opponents would defeat them.
    - c. Their “answer” was completely inadequate and false. They knew this to be the case, and they knew that the bystanders were aware of it.
    - d. Therefore Jesus won the debate because they could give no answer to his question.
  3. Questions to consider.
    - a. Why would Jesus have used this technique instead of answering them directly?
    - b. What does their reasoning and response tell us about their motives in asking the questions in the first place?
    - c. What is different about the way Jesus handles this question compared with the confrontations in his earlier ministry?
- C. The parable of the two sons. Matt. 21:28-32
1. Describe the attitudes of the two sons.
  2. What is the main point of this parable?
  3. What is the meaning of Jesus' conclusion in Matt. 21:31-32
- D. The parable of the tenants. Matt. 21:33-46.
1. What is the main point of the parable?
  2. Why might this parable be thought of as an allegory?
  3. There are various characters in the story – the landowner, his tenants, the first group of servants, the second group of servants, and the son of the landowner. What do these characters represent, and how do the events of the story demonstrate the history of the Jews and their attitude toward Jesus?
  4. How did the chief priests and elders of the people respond to the story?
  5. What was Jesus' final observation?
- E. Paying taxes to Caesar. Matt. 22:15-22.
1. Notice that the Herodians joined the Pharisees in this. There was little or no contact between the Pharisees and the Herodians.
  2. Matthew says that the Pharisees were trying to entrap Jesus. Why would they do this?
  3. The Jewish attitude toward Rome and Caesar.

- a. Caesar considered himself a god, and paying taxes to him could have been thought of as a tacit approval of their paganism.
    - b. The Jews hated Roman domination.
  - 4. Jesus' opponents attempted to use the dilemma against him just as he had used it. Their use of it was ineffective because they did not follow the principles for using this technique.
    - a. There were more than two possible answers to their question. They thought they were giving a yes-or-no question. "Is it lawful or not?" They reasoned that whichever horn of the dilemma Jesus took (yes or no) he would have trouble either from the Roman government or from the people.
    - b. They did not stop to consider that a third possibility was present, namely that we have obligations to both God and Caesar. This violated a vital principle in the use of the dilemma, and it was at this point that their argument failed.
    - c. Therefore Jesus' answer, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" won the argument.
  - 5. What is the main lesson you gain from this encounter?
- F. The greatest commandment. Matt. 22:34-40.
- 1. A Pharisee, an expert in the Law, asked a question to test Jesus.
  - 2. "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"
    - a. This was a matter of great debate among the Jews of Jesus' day.
    - b. Hillel (60 B.C. – A.D.20), an important rabbi whose influence reached into the days of Jesus' ministry, summarized the Law of Moses by giving a negative statement, "Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you."
    - c. Jesus stated this in the Golden Rule, but he put it in the positive. "Do unto others what you would have them do to you." This is the difference between actively doing good, or just refraining from doing what is evil.
    - d. Shammai (50 B.C. – A.D. 30), another important rabbi of the same period differed from Hillel in his view of the Law. He was a strong legalist who tried to emphasize almost every point of the entire law as being of equal importance with all others.
  - 3. Jesus quoted from Deut. 6:5 concerning loving God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind as the greatest commandment. He then quoted from Lev. 19:18 which states that they should not seek revenge against a fellow countryman, but you are to "love your neighbor as yourself."
  - 4. Jesus used the word *ἀγαπάω* (*agapaō*), denoting not emotion, but the will to do good to someone else. In this it is similar to the Golden Rule.



## II. The seven woes of Matthew 23.

### A. The preliminary considerations. Matt. 23:1-12.

1. This is the most negative and condemnatory discourse of Jesus. He seems, at this point to be exasperated with the Pharisees.
2. The seat of Moses in later Judaism was a real chair in the synagogue where the teacher sat while he was teaching. In Jesus day, it was a figure of speech used to refer to those who taught the Law.
3. They teach, but do not follow their own teaching. In this statement Jesus compliments the Pharisees for their emphasis on teaching the Scripture, but condemns them for not following the Scripture themselves.
4. Furthermore, they bind heavy burdens on others, but will not consider such burdens for themselves.
5. Description of the conduct of the Pharisees.
  - a. The language, though very caustic and sharp, reflects the type of debate which was characteristic of religious discussions among the Jews of Jesus' day. They would probably not have thought this to be as ruthless as it seems to us.
  - b. All that they (the Scribes and Pharisees) do they do to be thought of as very religious.
  - c. They make their phylacteries wide. These were generally very small boxes strapped to the forehead which contained portions of Scripture.
    - 1) See Deut. 6:4-9 where Israel is told to keep the commandments and "bind them on your foreheads." They made this a literal religious obligation.
    - 2) The Pharisees enlarged these phylacteries so that people would be sure to notice that they were very strict in keeping the Law.
  - d. They make their tassels long. Tassels were to have a blue cord in them, and placed on the four corners of the garment as reminders of the commandments of Num. 15:37-39. The Pharisees had made them particularly conspicuous so people would see evidence of their piety.
  - e. They love the places of honor at banquets. This would have been a position beside the host at a meal or banquet. This was a place of recognized importance.
  - f. They take the most important seats in the synagogue. These seats cannot be identified.
  - g. Salutations of "Rabbi." They enjoyed this kind of public recognition.
6. What observations did Jesus make, and what do they mean? What is Jesus teaching on this?

- a. Don't be called "Rabbi," don't call anyone "Father," don't be called "teacher." Is it wrong to use these titles?
- b. Questions of rank and titles. Why did Jesus allow himself to be called "Rabbi" and also "Teacher"? Note the clergy-laity idea. Does Jesus teach that titles, such as those above, are wrong?
- c. Humility vs. exaltation.
- d. Jesus emphasizes service rather than rank, title, or position.
- e. Donald Hagner makes this observation:

Jesus faults them particularly for their desire to impress others and their love of prestige and position. Such dangers also threaten Christians, and Jesus thus warns his disciples. They are to avoid titles that would set them apart from, and above, others in the community of faith, not because the particular titles are reprehensible but because of the assumption of superiority and elitism that so often goes with them. The demeanor of the disciples is to be characterized above all by the virtues of service and humility. Christians of every era and every circumstance, especially those in leadership roles, must learn again that true greatness consists in service.

(From Donald A. Hagner, *Word Bible Commentary: Matthew*, vol. 33-B. Comments on 23:12.)

B. The seven woes against the Scribes, and Pharisees.

1. Not only do they refuse to enter the kingdom themselves, but their conduct, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy also prevented others from doing so. 23:13-14.
2. They were zealous for converts, but they brought these converts into a diabolical situation. 23:15
3. They used loopholes to sidestep oaths and obligations they had vowed. 23:16-22
4. They loved to emphasize the minute portions of the Law, but they neglected its weightier matters. 23:23-24
5. They emphasized the outward appearance of things but neglected the condition of the heart. 23:25-26
6. They appear to conform to God outwardly, but inwardly they are full of corruption. 23:27-28
7. They mourned over the infidelity and atrocities of their forefathers, but failed to recognize their own guilt in doing the same things. 23:29-32

C. Jesus' final denunciation of these Jewish leaders, and his lament over the city of Jerusalem. Matt. 23:33-39

Conclusion:

1. This concludes Jesus encounters with the Jewish leaders, until his arrest, trial, and crucifixion
2. From this point on, he confines his teaching and association to his own disciples.

**Chapter XXVIII**  
**Prophecy of the**  
**Destruction of Jerusalem**  
Matt. 24, Mk. 13, Lk. 21

Introduction:

1. Some have thought that these chapters describe signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ, and the end of the world. However, a close examination of these passages shows that Jesus is speaking of two different events. First, the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in A.D. 70 under Titus the Roman General, and the second topic is Christ's own second coming. Although Jesus shows some parallels in these events, it is necessary to distinguish between them.
2. We need to look closely at what Jesus said to the disciples, and how those things were fulfilled.
3. Matthew 24 will be used as our primary source. Mark 13 and Luke 21 should also be read in preparation for this lesson.

I. The setting.

- A. Jesus had just completed his discourse in Matt. 23 dealing with the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees

1. In the latter part of Matt. 23 he gives his lament over Jerusalem, saying, "Your house is left to you desolate."
2. The disciples point out to him the beauty and massiveness of the temple area. Jesus' reply was that "not one stone will be left standing on another; every one will be thrown down." 24:1-2

- a. Remembering that the apostles were Galileans, the sight of the temple, though certainly not new to them, must have still been a wonder to see. Josephus says it was "the most marvelous edifice which we have ever seen or heard of, whether one considers its structure, its magnitude, or the richness of its every detail." (*Ant.* 15.11.3 §393).
- b. All the more then, the disciples must have been astounded at the statement of Jesus that one stone would not be left standing on another.

- B. The group left the temple area and went out to the Mt. of Olives. From the Mount there is a clear view across the Kidron Valley to the temple mound and the temple complex. The disciples asked two questions of Jesus. The first was concerned with the statement Jesus had just made about the fate of the Temple. The second related to his own second coming. These answers should not be confused with each other.

1. The first was: "Tell us when this will happen?"

- a. Jesus had just told them that the time would come when Jerusalem would be left desolate (23:38-39), and one stone of the temple would not be left standing on another (24:1-2). The chapter division at this point has caused some to miss the connection between these statements.
  - b. The disciples were interested to know when this catastrophic event was going to take place.
  - c. Matthew was probably writing his Gospel to the Hebrew Christians shortly before A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed. What affect might this information have had on the recipients?
2. The second question asked by the disciples was: “What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?”
- a. The Greek word translated “coming” is **παρουσια** (*parousia*). The basic meaning of this word is “presence,” and it is the word most frequently used when speaking of the second coming of Christ.
  - b. It must be remembered however that this word is not exclusively used concerning the second coming of Christ. It was the common Greek word used for the presence or coming of any one. See I Cor. 16:17, II Cor. 7:6, II Cor. 10:10, and Phil. 2:12.
  - c. What will be the signs “of the end of the age?” The Greek words which are used here are **συντελειος του αιωνος** (*sunteleios tou aionos*)
    - 1) The important word here is **αιωμος** (*aionos*) which means “an age.” It is variously translated as “world, forever, eternity, age, or into the ages.”
    - 2) The Greek phrase **συντελειος του αιωνος** (*sunteleios tou aionos*) literally means “the end of the age.”
  - d. Probably the best translation in English is that which is used in many contemporary versions; “age.”

## II. Jesus speaks of signs which are to precede this terrible destruction.

### A. This type of literature is called apocalyptic.

1. It frequently uses symbols such as wars, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, etc. to describe anticipated catastrophic events.
2. The books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation contain many uses of apocalyptic symbols.

### B. The first group of signs was to be the appearance of false Messiahs. 24:4-5

1. Jesus warned the disciples not to be deceived by the claims of these people.

2. Some of these false Messiahs are mentioned in the book of Acts, and also by Josephus, the Jewish historian who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70.
    - a. Although the revolutionaries in Acts would have come too early to be fulfillments of the predictions of Jesus, they show that these types of people arose among the Jews.
      - 1) Acts 5:37, Judas the Galilean is described as a revolutionary. Whether or not he ever made any Messianic claims is not known. To the Jews, the word Messiah could refer to a secular person who came as a deliverer (perhaps a military or political leader), and did not necessarily have to be a religious teacher as Jesus was.
      - 2) Acts 8:9-11 speaks of Simon the Sorcerer who claimed to be the great power of God. There is no indication however that he ever claimed to be the Messiah or that he was a revolutionary leader.
      - 3) Acts 21:38 speaks of an Egyptian who led 4,000 terrorists out into the desert. Some of the authorities responsible for Paul's arrest in Jerusalem thought that he might have been this Egyptian. Apparently the Egyptian was a religious leader of some sort.
    - b. It was not until Bar-Kakhba in A.D. 132 that we have a historical record of one who actually claimed to be the Messiah. His claim was not the same as the claims of Jesus. He led a failed revolt against the Romans which finally resulted in a second destruction of Jerusalem and expulsion of the Jews from the city. The city fell in A.D. 135, and was rebuilt by the Romans as a Roman colony. For a good while Jews were not allowed to return to the city.
- C. The second group of signs was "wars and rumors of wars." Matt. 24:6-7
1. Although many people cite this passage as one which heralds the second coming of Christ, it should be noted that Jesus is addressing the question concerning "When will these things be?" speaking of the statement that one stone would not be left standing on another. That is, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
  2. Josephus as well as Roman historians attest to the fact that the period from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70 was filled with wars and rumors of wars.
    - a. In various conflicts with the Romans and Syrians the Jews had as many as 20,000 people killed.
    - b. The emperor Caligula tried to raise his statue in the temple in Jerusalem, resulting in further conflicts.
    - c. Throughout the Roman Empire various wars and small skirmishes during the period from A.D.30-68 are recorded by the historians.

D. The third group of sign would be pestilence and famine. 24:7

1. In Acts 11:28 the prophet Agabus foretold a famine which occurred during the reign of Emperor Claudius.
2. Josephus says many died as a result of this famine.

E. The fourth group of signs would be earthquakes in various places. 24:7

1. Tacitus, the Roman historian mentions a number of earthquakes occurring in the empire during the period from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70.
2. There was an earthquake in Laodicea during the reign of Nero, another in Smyrna, and another in Rome. Various other are also recorded.

F. The fifth group of signs would be persecutions, and the apostasy of many of Christ's followers. 24:9-14

1. In the book of Acts we can see many of these persecutions.
2. There are many other such warnings in the writings of Paul.
3. The promise in 24:13 says those who endure to the end will be saved. That is, they will be delivered from the destruction of Jerusalem.
4. In 24:14 Jesus speaks of the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to every nation. (The gospel will not be confined just the Jewish nation, but will be world wide.)
  - a. Notice that this is in contrast to the statement made in Mt. 10 where Jesus sent the apostles only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
  - b. The universality of the proclamation of the gospel is stressed by the words **εν ολη τη οικουμενη** (*en olē tē oikoumenē*)/, translated "in the whole world." This phrase can also be translated "the whole human race" as in Acts 17:31, 19:27, and Rom. 3:10. This phrase does not use the Greek word **κοσμος** (*kosmos*) which is the common word referring to the cosmos or physical world, but **οικουμενη** (*oikoumenē*) which can refer to the habitable land, humanity, or the human race.

### III. A description of the peril at the time of the destruction.

A. Warnings to the Christian population. 24:15-25

1. "The abomination that causes desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel." Dan. 11:31. Various interpretations have been given to this phrase. Below are some of these.
  - a. In 167 B.C. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) of Syria set up a statue of Zeus in the temple, and tried to destroy Judaism by restricting religious practices of the Jews.

- b. In A.D. 40 the emperor Caligula planned to erect a pagan statue and construct a temple to Jupiter in the Jewish temple complex.
- 2. When they observed this “abomination that makes desolate” those in Jerusalem were told to flee to the mountains.
- 3. Those on the housetops were told not to go down into the house to get items to carry with them at the time of their escape.
- 4. Those in the field were not to return to get their cloaks.
- 5. Pregnant women and nursing mothers would have an especially difficult time.
- 6. They were to pray that their flight would not be in the winter or on the Sabbath.
  - a. Winter time would present greater hazards.
  - b. Sabbath restrictions would impede the efforts of Christians who tried to escape on the Sabbath day, causing additional problems.
  - c. Nursing mothers would have a more difficult time because of the care of their infants.
  - d. NOTE: It should be obvious that none of these signs and warnings can apply to the second coming of Christ because it would do no good for people to heed these kinds of warnings when Christ returns.
  - e. Some would be trying to convince others that a Messiah – Christ – was here or there, but they were not to believe it.
  - f. Some false prophets would come performing great miracles in order to lure the faithful away.
- B. The signs of the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky.
  - 1. Matthew 24:29 says that immediately after these things happen, there would be astronomical phenomena taking place.
    - a. Note that falling stars, the sun being darkened, etc. are frequently associated in prophetic writings with the fall of proud monarchs and nations. See Isaiah 13:9-10, 14:12-13, Joel 2:29-31, Jer. 4:23-24, Ezek. 32:7-8.
    - b. These constitute “signs of the Son of Man” appearing in the sky.
    - c. This may refer to the fact that the proud nation of Israel, the nation which rejected its Messiah, is going to experience another downfall (the falling stars, etc.). That will be a sign of the presence of Christ in all that was happening.
  - 2. The difficulty in this passage is the word “immediately.” Various interpretations have been given.
    - a. The New Testament speaks of the imminent (quick) return of Christ (Matt. 24:34), but also of his delayed return. See the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins and the Parable of the Talents in Matt. 25. The bride-



groom delayed his coming (Matt. 25:5), and the master of the servants was gone for a long time (Matt. 25:19).

- b. It is important to note that Jesus says, “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” Matt. 24:36.

- 1) This certainly shows that Jesus was not trying to teach that his second coming was immediate, that is very very soon.
- 2) Rather, he was saying that it could take place at any time. This is the idea of imminence.

- c. In view of the importance of the second coming and the fact that it might or might not happen soon or not so soon, he uses the word “immediately” to emphasize the necessity of preparedness as spoken of in the parables of chapter 25. “It may happen at any time.”

- d. Some hold a very popular belief which teaches that this is a type-antitype presentation. Just as the statement in Daniel 11:13 concerning “the abomination that makes desolate” may refer directly to Antiochus IV (167 B.C.) erecting the statue of Zeus on the altar of the temple, some interpreters believe this also means that the passage refers to the Romans destroying the Temple in A.D. 70.

- 1) This interpretation says that the action of Antiochus IV typifies the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70 with its horrific suffering and pain. The events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in turn, typify the horrific events accompanying the second coming of Christ in judgment. As God brought fierce judgment on Jerusalem for its unbelief, so he will bring his fierce judgment on an unbelieving world with the second coming of Christ.
- 2) In this view, the word “immediately” is not concerned so much with time as it is with the next God-directed event of such horrific magnitude, *i.e.* the second coming of Christ..

#### Conclusion:

- 1. The difficulties of this passage do not arise so much out of its predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, as they do concerning the second coming of Christ.
- 2. We should avoid speculation concerning fulfillment of prophecies since the New Testament fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies are seldom literal fulfillments. Usually the Old Testament prophecies have direct application to the prophet’s own day and circumstances, and are applied by the New Testament writers as fulfillments. Some of these can be seen in Hos. 11:1 fulfilled in Matt. 2:15, Is. 40:1-5 fulfilled in Matt. 3:1-3 and Lk. 3:4-6, and Ps. 69:7-9 fulfilled in Jn. 2:17.

## **Chapter XXIX**

### **Parables of the End**

Matt. 25

#### Introduction:

1. Chapters 23 through 25 form a single entity, and should be considered together, even though chapter 23 took place publicly (in the temple precincts) and 24-25 took place privately (on the Mount of Olives). Their connection can be seen by reading 23:37—24:3.
2. Notice that he says that no one knows the time when this is to happen. Instead, it will be at a time “when you do not expect him.”
3. What about present day predictions of Jesus’ return?

#### I. The Parable of the Ten Virgins. Matthew 25:1-13.

- A. What is the main point of the parable?
- B. What do the ten virgins represent in the parable?
- C. How did Jesus conclude the parable?

#### II. The Parable of the Talents. Matthew 25:14-30.

- A. What is the main point of this parable?
- B. What do the talents represent? (Notice that the talents were not the abilities of the servants, but they were given out to “each according to his ability.” The talents represented responsibilities which were assigned to each one.
- C. Each servant received a different amount. What was the basis of distributing the talents?
- D. Why did the one talent man bury his talent?
- E. Why did the five talent man and the two talent man both receive the same reward? (see verses 19-23)

#### III. The Final Judgment. The Sheep and the Goats. Matthew 25:31-46.

- A. How does Jesus introduce this scene?
- B. What is the main point of this story?
- C. Those on the right hand did not remember doing those good things for Jesus. What was Jesus reply to them?
- D. Contrast the statement and response to those on the right hand with those on the left hand. What is the difference, and why is it important?
- E. What is the fate of each?

Conclusion:

1. This discourse led to the preparation of the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper.
2. The final discourse of Jesus recorded by John took place after this.

## **Chapter XXX**

### **The Upper Room**

### **Farewell Discourse**

#### Introduction:

1. The setting is the Passover Feast.
  - a. Jesus washes the disciples' feet. John 13.
  - b. The Lord's Supper. Mt. 26:17-30, and other references.
  - c. Prediction of Judas' betrayal. See "Events Surrounding the Crucifixion."
  - d. Prediction of Peter's denial.
2. The exact sequence of these events is not clear since we have so little information.

#### I. The Lord's Supper.

##### A. Its meaning.

1. A memorial to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Notice that only Luke speaks of this being done in memory of Christ. See also I Cor. 11:17-32.
2. A time for personal examination.
3. The presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It is more than just a memorial.
4. The words of Jesus in Matt. 26:28, saying that his blood was to be poured out "for the forgiveness of sin" is the same phrase in Greek as is used in Acts 2:38 when Peter told the people to repent and be baptized "for the forgiveness of sins." This should put to rest any controversy about the purpose of repentance and baptism.

##### B. See I Cor. 11:17-32. This is the longest passage in the New Testament concerning the Lord's Supper.

1. So far as time of writing is concerned, I Corinthians 11 is the earliest statement written in the Bible concerning the Lord's Supper.
2. Paul said he received this information "from the Lord."

#### II. Comfort to the disciples – Jesus is going away, but he will return.

##### A. My Father's house. Jn. 14:1-14

1. The thrust of the passage is that there is a place prepared by God for his people.
2. Jesus had told the disciples earlier that he would leave them, and the threat of the Jews was becoming more urgent.

- a. This would have stirred anxiety in their hearts. Jesus seems to address this in his remarks.
  - b. With the events which were about to occur, Jesus gives them hope for the future.
- B. The objection of Thomas, and the request of Phillip. “Lord we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”
  1. Jesus’ reply. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jn. 14:6.
  2. What does this statement say about the need for all men to know Jesus?
  3. This is another of Jesus’ “I am” statements.
  4. Life and truth are frequently contrasted with death and falsehood in John’s Gospel.
- C. Jesus’ use of the confusion of the disciples.
  1. In this exchange we need to keep in mind that the disciples did not have a clear idea of what was about to happen. The questions they asked were perfectly natural.
  2. “You know the way to the place where I am going.” This prompted Thomas to say, “We don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”
  3. When Jesus speaks of people coming to the Father, this prompts Phillip to ask Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus’ response further enlightened the disciples concerning his own relationship to God. See Jn. 14:9-11
  4. Notice how Jesus used this type of strategy in other circumstances. He seems to purposely make a statement which is confusing, thus stirring further discussion of the topic. This moves the conversation in the direction he wants it to go.
    - a. Conversation with Nicodemus concerning the new birth. Jn. 3
    - b. Conversation with the Samaritan woman concerning the water. Jn. 4
    - c. Conversation with the Jews concerning the bread of life and eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Jn. 6
    - d. Conversation with the Jews that the truth would make them free. Jn. 8

### III. Jesus’ teaching on the Holy Spirit in the Farewell discourse.

#### A. General guidelines.

1. We must remember to whom Jesus was speaking at this time, and the purpose for which these statements were made.
2. The apostles believed they would be left “alone” if Jesus left them and went to the Father.
3. These statements demonstrate the divine guidance which was promised to the apostles, ultimately enabling them to reveal the gospel to the world. Remem-

ber they did not have the written gospel at the time Jesus made these statements.

B. Summary of his statements concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit.

1. Jn. 14:15-22. In this paragraph Jesus promises to give them another “Counselor.”
  - a. The Greek word used here, and in 14:26, 15:26, and 16:7 is *parakletos* (παράκλητος) which means one who is sent to assist another, a legal counselor, one who renders beneficial services to another, one who pleads another person’s case in court or before a judge, a legal assistant, an advocate, or a defender. See Thayer’s Lexicon or other Lexicons.
  - b. He identifies this Counselor as the Spirit of Truth.
  - c. He further says that the Spirit “lives with you, and shall be in you.” Jn. 14:17. Compare this with Acts 2:1-4
2. Jn. 14:25-27. Here Jesus refers to the Counselor as the Holy Spirit.
  - a. He promises the apostles that it will be through this means that they would be taught all things, and would be able to remember everything Jesus had said to them.
  - b. Notice that this is an exclusive promise to the apostles. It should not be confused with the gift of the Holy Spirit which every Christian receives at baptism. We today are not miraculously taught “all things,” nor are we supernaturally guided to remember everything Jesus had said.
  - c. The function of the Holy Spirit in the apostles was to empower them to deliver the revelation of the gospel. We frequently call this inspiration.
3. Jn. 15:26-27. Once again, Jesus refers to the Counselor whom he will send as the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father.
  - a. The Spirit of Truth would testify about Jesus.
  - b. With the Spirit miraculously guiding the apostles, they also would be testifying about Jesus.
4. Jn. 16:5-11. Here Jesus says it was best for them, and necessary for him to go away. Otherwise, the Counselor would not come.
  - a. Jesus’ mission to the apostles was to send them into the entire world.
  - b. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would accompany them wherever they went proclaiming the word. If Christ were to remain with them in body, he would not be able to go with each of them into different parts of the world.
  - c. This power of the Spirit with the apostles was necessary, since they had no written word at that time.
  - d. The functions of the Spirit was to be threefold.

- 1) He would convict the world with respect to sin because they did not believe.
  - 2) He would convict the world with respect to righteousness because he was returning to the Father, and they would see him no more.
  - 3) He would convict the world with respect to judgment because the prince of this world is condemned.
5. Jn. 16:12-15. When the Spirit of Truth is come he will guide you into all truth.
- a. The apostles would be able to reveal Christ's gospel just as God intended it to be revealed.
  - b. They would be guided into all truth.
  - c. The gift of the Holy Spirit given to all Christians does not guide each of us into all truth. If we were so guided, we would be able to teach and preach without the written word, just as they were.

Conclusion:

1. Much of Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit is in these three chapters.
2. It is important that all the other passages in the New Testament concerning the work of the Holy Spirit be studied when looking at this topic.

## **Chapter XXXI**

### **The Prayer of Jesus**

#### **John 17**

#### Introduction:

1. This is sometimes called the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus.
    - a. It speaks of the offering Jesus was about to make of himself for the sins of the world.
    - b. He consecrates his disciples for their mission.
  2. The prayer divides itself into three sections.
    - a. Jesus' prayer for himself. 17:1-5
    - b. Jesus' prayer for his disciples. 17:6-19
    - c. Jesus' prayer for all believers. 17:20-26
  3. Although the word *λογος* is not mentioned in the chapter, the idea of Jesus as "the revealer" is strongly seen. He has come to show them the Father. That was his mission.
- I. The glory of the Father and the Son.
- A. His hour has come.
1. What was the "hour" he spoke of? This is a common term Jesus uses in John.
  2. He asks God to glorify Him that the Son may glorify the Father.
  3. How did the cross glorify the Father? How did it glorify the Son?
  4. God has given Christ the power to give eternal life.
  5. Eternal life is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ.
    - a. The synoptics speak frequently of the kingdom, but John scarcely uses that word. John frequently uses the idea of eternal life, but the synoptics scarcely use this word.
    - b. How is it "eternal life" to know God?
    - c. What is it to "know God"?
    - d. How might the Gnostic ideas have fit into John's use of the word "knowledge"?
- B. The glory of Christ and God.
1. How did Christ glorify God? By doing what God sent him to do.
  2. He now asks to be returned to the glory he previously had with the Father.



## II. His prayer for the disciples. 17:6-19

### A. He had revealed God to them. How did he do this?

1. Christ gave the apostles the words God gave to Him.
2. They believed that Jesus came from God.
3. They knew “with certainty” that Christ came from God. (vs. 8)
  - a. How did they know this?
  - b. Note that he did not say, “they believed,” but that “they know.”

### B. Jesus prays for protection of the apostles.

1. He will be with them no longer.
2. They remain in the world, therefore need divine protection.
  - a. He asks God to protect them by the power of his name – the name you gave me. (vs.11)
  - b. Why did he pray for this? Note his answer. “So that they might be one.”
3. Christ protected them while with them, “by the name that you gave me” (vs.12)
4. Only Judas was lost. “Doomed to destruction that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

### C. Jesus anticipates his return to the Father.

1. He wants their joy to be full. John has Jesus using this expression a number of times, and also uses it in I John 1:4.
2. They are not to be of this world, just as Jesus himself was not of this world.
3. He prays, “Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth.”
  - a. In John, Jesus uses the word “truth” more than in any other Gospel writer.
  - b. In John Jesus speaks of himself as the receptacle of truth. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”
  - c. He uses the words truth, truly, and true almost fifty times.
  - d. How might this have fit into the framework of the time (about AD 90) when John wrote his Gospel?

## III. His prayer for all believers. 17:20-26

### A. For all who believe on me through their word.

1. Unity among believers – that they may all be one.
2. He illustrates this by saying, “Just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us.”

- a. What is the force of “I in you and you in me”?
    - b. How is unity among believers a message to the world that God did, in fact send Christ?
  3. What was the goal of this unity among believers? “That the world may believe that you have sent me.”
  4. “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me.”
- B. His desire is to bring the disciples to himself.
1. He wants the disciples to see his glory with the Father.
  2. The world doesn’t know the Father, “but I know you and they know you sent me.”
  3. I will continue to make you known to them so that your love for me will be in them and that I may be in them.

## **Chapter XXXII**

### **Events Surrounding the Crucifixion**

The following is a general summary of the events surrounding the crucifixion. The incomplete information given in the Gospel accounts makes it impossible to always pinpoint the exact sequence of all events.

#### **I. In the Upper Room.**

- A. Washing the disciples' feet. Jn. 13:1-17
- B. Eating the Passover meal. Jn. 13:1
- C. Instituting the Lord's Supper. Matt. 26:17-30, Mk. 14:12-26, Lk. 22:7-13
  - 1. Note that Matthew and Mark say, after this that "When they had sung a hymn they went out." See Matt. 26:30 and Mk. 14:26, Lk. 22:39. John however mentions other events which took place before they left. See Jn. 14:31.
  - 2. John is the only one who record the events of John 14, 15, 16, and 17.
- D. Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal. Mt. 26:20-25, Mk. 14:17-21, Jn. 13:18-30
- E. Jesus predicts Peter's denial. Mt. 26:31-35, Mk. 14:27-31, Lk. 22:33-34, Jn. 13:36-38

#### **II. Final Discourse and prayers after leaving the Upper Room.**

- A. John 14, 15, 16, and 17 all take place after they left the Upper Room, but the discourse in these chapters is found only in John.
- B. Prayers for strength. Mt. 26:36-46, Mk. 13:32-42, Lk. 22:39-46. The prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17 may have taken place at this time, but we do not know the sequence here.

#### **III. Arrest and Trials.**

- A. Some observations on the trials of Jesus.
  - 1. Annas the High Priest had been deposed in A.D. 15 by the Romans. Many of the Jews probably still considered him the legitimate high priest while Caiaphas, his son-in-law was probably approved by the Romans.
  - 2. The Jews told Pilate they had no right to execute anyone, yet in Acts 7 they stoned Stephen. It is thought that they wanted a crucifixion, bringing the curse of the Law on the victim (See Deut. 21:23 and Gal. 3:13.)
  - 3. Jesus may have been thought of as a false prophet, and tried as such. The death penalty would then have been applicable, especially if he "secretly enticed" followers.
  - 4. Notice the Jews were particularly careful not to violate the ceremonial requirement that they not defile themselves by entering the house of a Gentile,

and would therefore not be able to eat the Passover. However they were not concerned that's they were plotting the execution of an innocent man.

5. There were certain illegalities in the trial. These rules come from a second century document known as *The Sanhedrin*, but are believed to have been in force orally when Jesus was tried.
  - a. Capital cases were not to be tried at night.
  - b. A verdict of death could not be reached until the day following the trial.
  - c. A death sentence could not be given except when the assembled Sanhedrin was in its regular meeting place, the Hewn Chamber. The trial of Jesus was held at the house (perhaps palace) of the High Priest. Sees Lk. 22:54.
- B. The arrest. Matt. 26:47-56, Mk. 14:43-50, Lk. 22:47-53, Jn. 15:1-11
- C. Trial before Sanhedrin. Mt. 26:57-69, Mk. 14:53-65, Lk. 22:66—23:5, Jn. 18:12-14, 19-24.
- D. Peter's denial. Note: Peter's denials are taking place while Jesus is being tried before the Sanhedrin. Mt. 26:69-75, Mk. 14:66-72, Lk. 22:55-62, Jn. 18:16-18, 25-27
- E. Judas hangs himself. Mt. 27:1-10
- F. First trial before Pilate. Mt. 27:11-14, Mk. 15:1-5, Lk. 23:1-7, Jn. 18:28
- G. Jesus before Herod. Lk. 23:8-12
- H. Second trial before Pilate. Mt. 27:15-31, Mk. 15:6-20, Lk. 23:13-25, Jn. 18:29—19:16
- I. Crucifixion and death. Mt. 27:32-56, Mk. 15:21-41, Lk. 23:26-49, Jn. 19:17-37
- J. Burial. Mt. 27:57-61, Mk. 15:42-47, Lk. 23:50-56, Jn. 19:38-42
- K. Resurrection, Appearances and Ascension. Mt. 27:62—28:20, Mk. 16:1-20, Lk. 24:1-53, Jn. 20:1—21:25

## **Chapter XXIII**

### **The Resurrection and Appearances**

John 20-21

#### Introduction:

1. When compared with the Synoptics, the Gospel of John is unique in its treatment of the resurrection and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.
  2. When we take into account John's stated purpose in the prologue (Jn. 1:1-18) we should not be surprised to discover that John gives more information on these topics than all three of the Synoptics combined.
  3. The accounts in the four Gospels present chronological and topical problems which cannot be adequately explained.
    - a. This fact however should not be a source of doubt in the mind of a Christian, given the limited amount of information provided by the various writers.
    - b. The inclusion of material by one writer, or the exclusion of material by another should be expected when four different writers report the same events. These should not be taken as signs of conflict or a lack of historical accuracy. The information is incomplete, and is given from differing vantage points.
  4. This chapter will deal with the resurrection and appearances as recorded by John, with only brief references to the accounts in the Synoptics
- I. The empty tomb and John's use of "signs."
- A. John treats this as the ultimate "sign."
1. This is the stated purpose of the Gospel, and John, more than any of the other writers treats the resurrection in this way. See Jn. 19:31-37, 20:30-31 and 21:24-25.
  2. It is interesting that John is the only writer who records the resurrection of Lazarus, giving 44 verses in chapter 11 to that story. The Synoptics do not give that much space to any of the miracles they record. John also gives the most information on the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.
    - a. He is clearly interested in the "sign" value of the resurrection and post-resurrection events, devoting 53 verses to these events. His account covers a wider variety of circumstances than the Synoptics record.
    - b. Matthew gives only 20 verses covering these events, Mark gives 8 verses (plus the controversial last 12 verses, making 20 in all), and Luke gives 53. Luke's account however deals with only a very limited set of circumstances in contrast to John's coverage.

3. John 20:30-31 is universally recognized as John's statement of his purpose in writing the Gospel. Simply stated, he wrote it in order that his readers might believe.
  - a. John begins his Gospel by stating that the *Logos* was God in the flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14), and he ends the Gospel with the same christological thought, but he states it in a little different way.
  - b. His use of signs has a twofold purpose; to deepen the faith of believers, and to bring non-believers to faith.
4. John's account of the resurrection and the other signs in his Gospel should be seen as pointers.
  - a. The Synoptics use the miracles of Jesus to affirm his power. Jesus is the one who brings the kingdom of God and he has power over disease, over demons, etc. John uses the signs as pointers in order to affirm the claims of Jesus concerning his person; he is the Messiah, he is the preexisting one, he is God in the flesh. What is at stake with John is the recognition of the divinity of Jesus as the only begotten Son.
5. Did John succeed in his undertaking?
  - a. The answer to this is both "yes" and "no."
    - 1) When the crowds were coming to Jerusalem for the Passover John states, "Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him." Jn. 12:9-11.
    - 2) "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him." Jn. 12:37
  - b. One must remember that the existence of overwhelming evidence (in any area of life) does not guarantee acceptance of the truth to which it points. Other forces are also at work such as prejudice, pride in one's own opinion, social and peer pressures, other interests, etc.
  - c. Tensions almost always exist between acceptance of a newly discovered truth and one's own former faith or opinion. This is especially evident when the new discovery contradicts one's current beliefs.
- B. Jn. 20:1-9. The empty tomb: the reaction of the followers of Jesus to the discovery of the empty tomb.
  1. The reaction of Mary Magdalene.

- a. This appearance took place very early in the morning. John uses the Greek word *πρωι* (*prōi*) which refers to the last watch of the early morning, from 3 a.m. until 6 a.m.
  - b. The stone in the opening of the tomb would have been a large round stone, somewhat similar in appearance to a large millstone. It rolled in a trough or wide groove in the ground. Matthew says the stone was sealed so that no one could open the tomb in order to remove the body. Matt. 26:62-66.
  - c. All of the Gospel writers identify Mary Magdalene in their accounts of the passion and resurrection, but only Luke identifies her prior to this. See Lk. 8:2
  - d. Each of the Synoptics also mentions that there was a group of women who went to the tomb. Mark and Luke say they went to the tomb to anoint the body with spices, but neither Matthew nor John gives a reason for the visit. John does not mention a group of women.
  - e. It was customary for families and loved ones to visit a tomb for three days after burial because it was thought by some that the spirit hovered in the tomb for a period of time after death.
  - f. When Mary discovered that the tomb was empty, she ran to inform Peter and the other disciples, saying “they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him.” Jn. 20:2. Apparently she did not consider the possibility of a resurrection, but only that the tomb had been violated.
2. The reactions of Peter and John.
- a. Peter and “the disciple whom Jesus loved” both ran to the tomb, but the other disciple outran Peter and stood at the entrance of the tomb. Peter entered the tomb first.
    - 1) This “disciple whom Jesus loved” is generally believed to have been John himself, though he is never identified as such in the text.
    - 2) Some have attempted to identify him as Lazarus and others the rich young ruler because Jesus is said to have loved both of them.
  - b. Jesus’ followers could have considered a number of possibilities concerning the missing body. Grave robbers could have stolen it or the Jews could have stolen it in order to further desecrate it. Some of the Roman authorities could have stolen it to keep the location from becoming a shrine and rallying place for disgruntled or revolutionary Jews.
  - c. The burial clothes were still there and still in place, which would probably not have been the case if the body had been stolen.
    - 1) When Peter entered the tomb, John says “he saw and believed.” However, he inserts a statement that “They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.” See Jn. 20:9 and Lk. 24:45-47.

- 2) The Scripture John is referring to may be Ps. 16:10. “Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.”
- 3) In Peter’s Pentecost sermon, he used this passage from Psalms as a prediction of the resurrection of Christ. Act. 2:27.
- 4) Apparently the evidence of the empty tomb caused both Peter and John to believe that the resurrection had taken place, though they did not yet understand the Old Testament Scriptures concerning this.

## II. The appearances of Jesus.

A. Jn. 20:10-18. After Mary’s discovery of the empty tomb she informed the disciples.

1. Mary returned to the tomb at the time that Peter and John ran to it. When they left, she stayed outside the tomb crying.
  - a. Looking into the tomb again, she saw two angels dressed in white sitting, one at the head, and the other at the foot where the body had been placed.
  - b. The Greek word translated “angel” is **αγγελος** (*aggelos*) which means “messenger.” They asked her why she was weeping.
2. Jn. 20:13 tells us that Jesus came to Mary as she was crying, but she supposed him to be the gardener.
3. Mk. 16:2. Mark tells us that at times, the “form” of Jesus was changed. This may apply here and elsewhere, causing the disciples not to recognize Jesus.
  - a. In the Mark passage, the Greek words **εν ετερα μορφη** (*en hetera morphē*) are translated “in a different form.”
  - b. This phrase has to do with the basic appearance and nature of an object or, in this case, a person.
  - c. In Phil. 2:7 the word **μορφη** (*morphē*) is also used to describe the incarnation when Jesus took “the very nature” of a servant.
4. When Jesus called Mary’s name, she responded “Rabboni” which was the Aramaic word for Rabbi, or teacher.
  - a. Jesus instructed her not to “touch” him because he had not yet ascended to the Father.
  - b. This is thought by some to be in conflict with the later permission which Jesus gave to Thomas, Jn. 20:27, inviting him to touch the nail holes in his hands and place his hand in his side. A proper understanding of the words used here can remove this apparent conflict.
5. The word translated “touch” in some versions is **απτεσθαι** (*aptesthai*) which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person present indicative middle voice of **απτω** (*aptō*).



- a. In the active voice this word means to touch or hold, but when it is used in the middle voice, as it is in this passage, it means to cling to or to hold on to something so it will not escape or be lost. Since 1902, when the American Standard Version was translated, many translations have taken notice of this use of the word. Some of the older translations put the meaning of the middle voice in a footnote.
    - b. When Mary recognized Jesus, she may have embraced him. The sense of the passage is this: Jesus said to her, “Don’t hold on to me, but go instead and tell my brothers . . .”
  - 6. What is the meaning of the statement in vs. 17 “I have not yet returned to the Father”?
  - a. This seems to imply that Jesus was telling Mary that she was not to hold him because the whole process is not yet complete. It will not be complete until I ascend back to the Father. So go tell my brothers that this is what I must do.
    - b. Mary returned to the disciples and reported all of this to them.
- B. Jn. 20:19-23. Jesus appeared to the disciples in a closed room.
- 1. The news of the empty tomb surely must have become common knowledge rather quickly. Remember the events concerning the guards who had been placed at the tomb, and the news about the missing body. See Matt. 28:11-15.
  - 2. The events of verses 19-31 took place in the evening of the day of the resurrection. The appearance with Thomas in the room took place one week later.
    - a. John mentions that the doors were locked for fear of the Jews.
    - b. Jesus came and stood before them. John does not tell us how this took place, but only that the doors were locked.
    - c. Jesus showed them his hands and side, and they believed and were overjoyed. Thomas was not present.
      - 1) Notice that Jesus showed them his hands and his side, as evidence that the body you are now seeing is the same body which was hanging on the cross.
      - 2) The resurrection of Jesus was not a “spiritual” resurrection (Jehovah Witnesses) or the “resurrection of his cause” (liberal theology). John goes to great lengths to demonstrate that this was a bodily resurrection.
      - 3) Any view of the resurrection other than a bodily resurrection confronts the all important question, “If the resurrection was not in bodily form, what happened to the physical body of Jesus? How can we account of it?” How can the integrity of the Gospels be defended if the tomb was not actually empty as they represent it?

3. Vs. 23 has been used by Roman Catholics to defend the confessional and apostolic succession. This verse teaches two things:
  - a. This is, in some ways, John's way of expressing the Great Commission. Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
  - b. As Christ's mission was "to seek and to save the lost," so Jesus says to the disciples, this now is your mission to carry the power of salvation to others.
    - 1) Jesus depends on the church to carry out his mission.
    - 2) Jesus then imparted the Holy Spirit to them, stating that, "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."
  - c. Compare this to Matt. 16:19 concerning binding and loosing when Jesus was speaking to Peter, and Matt. 18:18 when he applied the same language to all of the apostles.
  - d. Only God can forgive man's sins, so the meaning of this passage is not the empowering of human beings (even the apostles) to forgive the sins of others. Instead, Jesus is saying that these disciples are to be the channels through which the message of God's forgiveness is transmitted.
  - e. For a man to have the power to forgive sins, he would also have to have the power of knowing the heart of the sinner as God knows his heart. Otherwise, how can a human being know if the sinner had repented or if his request for forgiveness is just a sham?
- C. Jn. 20:24-29. Again, Jesus appears to the disciples in a closed room. This time Thomas is present.
  1. John tells us that Thomas had said he would not believe unless he could see and touched the evidence.
  2. In Jn. 11:16, when Jesus proposed going to Bethany to raise Lazarus, Thomas suggested that they all go, "that we may die with him."
    - a. This seems to be a sort of resignation on the part of Thomas that all of the disciples would become martyrs to the cause of Jesus when they went to Jerusalem.
    - b. Thomas should be seen more as a pragmatist by nature than a doubter.
    - c. Only John identifies Thomas as **Διδυμος** (*Didumos*) which is the Greek word for "Twin."
  3. When Thomas was faced with the evidence he was convinced, and confessed his faith to Christ – "My Lord and my God."

- a. We should also note that when Jesus first appeared to the other disciples he showed them his hands and side. When they saw these, they believed. See Jn. 20:20.
  - b. This is seen in contrast to the Jews who were faced with evidence of Jesus' claims all along the way, but refused to believe. See Jn. 12:42-43.
  - c. Thomas should be admired for his honesty in the presence of the others. He was unwilling to affirm faith in something of which he was not fully convinced.
  - d. It seems that Thomas was fighting within himself, refusing to profess a belief in the resurrection simply because others were sure of their own faith. He was being true to himself in this.
  - e. Thomas shows us that for some people, coming to faith might be more easily accomplished than for others. Some may face very challenging circumstances even within their own personalities. They have to travel a difficult road. But their faith, once established, is profound, and far stronger than a glib faith that relies only on the testimony of others for its validity.
4. In a pseudepigraphic book called *The Acts of Thomas*, written about A.D. 200-225, there are legends about what happened in his life. It should be noted that this is not a book of reliable history, but there may be some historical basis for some of its events. This book indicates that Thomas went to India to preach the gospel.

D. Jn. 20:30-31. John's reason for writing.

1. John affirms that Jesus did many other miracles which have not been written down.
2. The purpose of his writing was to establish faith – "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."
3. This affirmation goes back to the Prologue, Jn. 1:1-18 as a statement of his purpose.

III. Jn. 21:1-23. Jesus appears to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, that is, the Sea of Galilee.

A. The epilogue.

1. Some scholars believe the last chapter was added by a later author, not by John.
  - a. Most contemporary scholars, both liberal and conservative, believe that John's original writing concluded with the end of chapter 20 where he states his purpose in writing.
  - b. These scholars generally believe that a short time later John recorded the incidents at the Sea of Tiberias and that this addition became part of the overall book.

2. It should be noted that there is no manuscript evidence to indicate that the book ever circulated without chapter 21. Also scholars acknowledge that the vocabulary, syntax, and style of writing are unmistakably Johannine.
3. Chapter 21 divides itself into three distinct sections:
  - a. Jesus and the group of disciples
  - b. Jesus and Peter.
  - c. Closing statement from John.

B. Jn. 21:1-14. Jesus and the group of disciples.

1. Seven of the disciples were present: Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, and two who are not identified.
2. The fact that they decided to go back to their secular work as fishermen does not indicate a loss of confidence in their experience with the risen Christ. They simply had to make a living.
  - a. From this passage and from Luke 5, we may conclude that night was the best time to fish.
  - b. In both of these incidents they had not had a successful night.
3. Notice the details of the story of the great draught of fish, and compare it with the similar story in Luke 5:4-7. Among some of the ancient Christian writers, these stories came to be thought of as allegories.

C. A note on allegorical interpretation.

1. Allegorical interpretation is the act of taking a story, real or imagined, and assigning a symbolic meaning to the various elements of the story. Each of the symbols is then given a sort of "hidden meaning."
  - a. Augustine (A.D. 345-430) believed that John's account of the great draught of fish after the resurrection, and the account of a similar incident in Luke 5 at the time of the call of the disciples, were symbols of the church in eternity in its perfection (from John) and the church on earth (from Luke). According to Augustine these were symbolic events:
    - 1) In the first (Luke 5) there were both good and bad fish (see also Matt. 13:46-50) while in the second (John 21) there are only good fish. In the church on earth there are good and bad people, but in the "eternal heavenly church" there will be only the good.
    - 2) In the first no number of fish is stated, but in the second the exact number is stated. In the church on earth there are many who are not committed Christians, but the eternal church will be made up of the specific number of the chosen ones.

- 3) In the first, the nets began to break, but in the second he specifically says that the nets did not break. The church on earth is fragile and may be broken, but in eternity it will be safe.
  - 4) In the first the boat began to sink, but in the second it was secure. The church on earth may falter, but in heaven there will be no such faltering.
- b. One might also note that a point is made by some of the ancient writers that Peter was the one who dragged the net ashore, the shore being a symbol of heaven.
2. No such symbolism should be forced on this or any other passage except where the Bible interprets the events as symbolic.
  3. Allegorical interpretation goes back as far as certain Jews in Alexandria during the days of Philo (15 B.C.-50 A.D.). It was advocated in the second and third Christian centuries by Origen (A.D.185-254), and carried forward to Augustine (354-430) and others.
  4. Origen was the strongest and most influential proponents of allegorical interpretation during the very early centuries of Christianity. For centuries his allegorical methods had a commanding influence on the development of Catholic theology. He believed that even the simplest events have three levels of interpretation. Thus a story or event would become an allegory rather than just a historical incident. Origen divided such passages into three levels of interpretation:
    - a. The most basic level is to understand the simple historical meaning of a story or incident. This is the level of the very immature learner. In the passage in John 21, this means you understand the facts of the story of the draught of fish, and that is as far as it goes.
    - b. The second level is to see principles of application to one's personal life or the church at large, or to society. This was considered a more advanced understanding, but was not the highest level. A person on this level is able to gain practical lessons from a story or event.
    - c. The third and highest level is to see the symbolic meaning of an incident or event as in the story of the draught of fish described above. This, Origen believed, was the level of the most mature Christian.
  5. No such symbolism should be forced on this or any other passage.
- D. Jn. 21:15-23. Jesus and Peter.
1. Peter is questioned three times concerning his love for Christ.
  2. To what does the phrase "more than these" refer?
    - a. Some have said it applies to the other disciples. That is, "Peter do you love me more than these other disciples love me?"

- b. Others have said it applies to the physical things around him such as his fishing business. That is, “Peter do you love me more than you love the nets, boats, equipment and opportunities of your business?”
  - c. A final possibility is whether or not Peter loves Christ more than he loves those other disciples. That is, “Peter do you love me more than you love Nathaniel, Thomas, James or John?”
- 3. The Greek words **φιλεω** (*phileō*) and **αγαπαω** (*agapaō*) are both used by Jesus and Peter, but in somewhat reversed order.
  - a. Although these words usually have different emphasis, throughout this Gospel John uses them almost interchangeably.
  - b. Most ancient commentators did not understand them to be used differently in this passage. Some modern commentators have tried to show a difference, but it is difficult to see exactly how this would affect the message.
- 4. Notice that Peter nowhere addresses the full question, “Do you love me more than these?” Instead, he answers only the first part of the question, “Peter, do you love me?” To this he gives the answer, “Lord you know that I love you.”
  - a. This reminds us of Peter’s strong affirmation in Matt. 26:33 where he said, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”
  - b. But Jesus told Peter that he would deny him three times. Peter then strongly affirmed his loyalty and willingness to die for Christ.
  - c. It is interesting that Jesus now questions Peter three times.
- 5. Jesus replies to Peter’s affirmations of his love:
  - a. Feed my lambs.
  - b. Take care of my sheep.
  - c. Feed my sheep.
- 6. All of these responses of Jesus have to do with pastoral care; feeding and caring for his sheep and his lambs.
- 7. The word for “feed” is **βοσκω** (*boskō*). It is found only 9 times in the New Testament, but only here is it applied to feeding sheep or lambs. In the other places it refers to feeding swine. See Matt. 8:30, 33, Mk. 5:11, 14, Lk. 8:32, 34, and Lk. 15:15.
- 8. In verse 16 the word **ποιμαινω** (*poimainō*) is translated “take care of.” From the same root we get the word **ποιμην** (*poimēn*) meaning to be a shepherd. Elders in the church are referred to as shepherds. See I Pet. 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28.
  - a. Some commentators have made a distinction between the care of the sheep and care of the lambs, stating that the lambs are symbolic of the laity of the church and the sheep are symbolic of the clergy of the church.

- b. This passage has been used to promote the doctrine of the primacy of Peter, but this is considered anachronistic exegesis – exegesis which is out of touch with the time of origin of the passage, and injecting later practices back into a meaning of the passage.

9. 21:18-19. Prediction of Peter's death.

- a. Jesus said to Peter that he now clothes himself and goes where he wants to go, but the time would come when he would spread out his hands and some one else would clothe him and lead him where he did not want to go.
- b. Some scholars believe that this is referring to the fact that in his old age, Peter would be somewhat helpless, and would have to hold out his hands for another person to dress him and lead him wherever he went. The expression in Greek and secular writings can support this interpretation.
- c. On the other hand, this expression was also used by ancient writers to signify death by crucifixion, that is, the spreading of the hands. This is based on the statement in Jn. 21:19.
  - 1) The earliest reference to this as a prediction of Peter's crucifixion comes from Tertullian in about A.D. 211.
  - 2) Origen, who is quoted by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*), is the first to state that in Peter's martyrdom he was crucified with his head down. There is some doubt about the authenticity of Origen's comment, but this later became a tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.

Conclusion:

- 1. Throughout the resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, John affirms the truth of his eye witness testimony.
- 2. He concludes by saying that the world itself would not hold the books which could be written about the works of Jesus.

**Appendix A**  
**SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

NOTE: This outline does not include all of the events recorded in the Gospels.

Sec #		EVENT	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
	<b>I.</b>	<b>Prologues, Birth, Early Ministry</b>				
1.01		John's Prologue				1:1-18
1.02		Luke's Prologue			1:1-4	
1.03		Promised Birth of John			1:5-25	
1.04		Annunciation to Mary			1:26-38	
1.05		Annunciation to Joseph	1:18-25			
1.06		Birth of John the Baptist			1:57-80	
1.07		Birth of Jesus	2:1-23		2:1-20	
1.08		Growing Up In Nazareth			2:40-52	
1.09		John's Ministry and Jesus' Baptism	3:1-17	1:3-11	3:1-34	1:19-34
1.10		Temptations In The Wilderness	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
1.11		Calling The First Disciples				1:35-51
1.12		The First Miracle -- Galilee				2:1-11
1.13		Cleansing the Temple				2:12-22
1.14		With Nicodemus In Jerusalem				2:23-3:21
1.15		The Samaritan Woman				4:1-42
	<b>II.</b>	<b>Early Galilean Ministry</b>				
2.01		Early Preaching Tour	4:12-17			



2.02		First Rejection at Nazareth			4:14-30	
2.03		Calling Other Disciples and Healing	4:18-23	1:14-20	5:1-11	
2.04		Jesus Drives Out Evil Spirit		1:21-28	4:31-37	
2.05		Other Healing Miracles		1:29-39		
		<b>A Brief Visit To Jerusalem</b>				
2.06		Healing At The Pool Of Bethesda				5:1-15
2.07		Clash With Religious Authorities				5:16-47
		<b>Return to Galilee</b>				
2.08		The Sermon On The Mount	5-6-7			
		<b>Ministry of Miracles</b>				
2.09		Healing The Leper	8:1-4	1:40-44	5:12-14	
2.10		The Centurion's Servant Healed	8:5-13		7:1-10	
2.11		The Widow's Son Healed			7:11-17	
2.12		The Cost of Discipleship	8:18-22		9:57-62	
2.13		Jesus Heals the Paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
2.14		Jesus Sends Out the Twelve	10:1-42			
2.15		John the Baptist and Jesus	11:2-19		7:18-35	
2.16		The Lord of the Sabbath	12:1-14	2:23--3:6	6:1-11	
	<b>III.</b>	<b>Mid-Galilean Ministry</b>				
3.01		Jesus Anointed At Simon's Home			7:36-50	
3.02		Stilling The Tempest	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	

3.03		Jairus' Daughter and the Sick Woman	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
3.04		Parables Of The Kingdom	13:1-50	4:1-34	8:1-15+	
3.05		Second Rejection at Nazareth	13:54-58	6:1-6		
3.06		The Death Of John The Baptist	14:1-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
3.07		Feeding Of The 5,000	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-13
3.08		Jesus Walks On The Water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-24
3.09		Discourse On The Bread Of Life				6:25-71
	<b>IV.</b>	<b>Later Galilean Ministry</b>				
4.01		Faith of the Canaanite Woman	15:21-28	7:24-30		
4.02		The Demand For A Sign	16:1-4	8:11-21		
4.03		Peter's Confession of Christ	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21	
4.04		Jesus Predicts His Death	16:21-28	8:31--9:1	9:22-27	
4.05		The Transfiguration	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36	
4.06		"Who Is The Greatest"	18:1-5	9:33-40	9:46-50	
4.07		Parable of the Unmerciful Servant	18:21-35			
4.08		At the Feast of Tabernacles				7:1-52
4.09		Woman Taken in Adultery				7:53--8:11
4.10		Discourse - Light of the World				8:12-30
4.11		Discourse on Spiritual Freedom				8:31-59
4.12		Parable of the Good Samaritan			10:25-37	
4.13		A Visit To Mary and Martha			10:38-42	
4.14		Healing the Man Born Blind				9:1-41

4.15		The Good Shepherd				10:1-21
4.16		Jesus at the Feast of Dedication				10:22-42
4.17		God's Concern for the Lost			15:1-32	
4.18		Teaching On Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12		
4.19		The Rich Young Man	19:16-30	10:17-31	18:18-30	
4.20		Raising of Lazarus				11:1-54
	<b>V.</b>	<b>Passion, Resurrection, Ascension</b>				
5.01		Anointing at Bethany				12:1-11
5.02		Entry Into Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:28-44	12:12-19
5.03		Challenge to the Authority of Jesus	21:12-27	11:15-33	19:45-- 20:8	
5.04		Other Questions And Answers	21:28--22:46	12:1-37	20:9-40	
5.05		Warnings To Scribes and Pharisees	23:1-39			
5.06		Jerusalem's Fate And Second Coming	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36	
5.07		Parables Of The End	25:1-46			
5.08		The Jews Rejection Of Jesus				12:37-50
5.09		Judas' Conspiracy	26:1-5		22:1-6	
5.10		Anointing at Bethany	26:6-13	14:3-9	7:36-50	12:1-8
5.11		The Lord's Supper	26:17-30	14:12-26	22:7-30	
5.12		Jesus Washes The Disciples' Feet				13:1-30
5.13		Jesus' Final Discourse				14:1--16:33
5.14		The Intercessory Prayer				17:1-26
5.15		Betrayal And Arrest	26:30-56	14:26-52	22:39-53	18:1-12

5.16		Trial Before The Sanhedrin	26:57--27:10	14:53-- 15:1	22:54-71	18:12-57
5.17		Trial Before Pilate	27:11-31	15:1-20	23:1-25	18:28-- 19:16
5.18		The Crucifixion And Burial	27:32-61	15:21-47	23:26-56	19:38-42
5.19		The Resurrection	28:1-7	16:1-11	24:1-12	20:1-18
5.20		Appearances After The Resurrection	28:8-10	16:12-14	24:13-44	20:19-- 21:25
5.21		The Great Commission	28:16-20	16:15-16	24:45-49	
5.22		The Ascension		16:19-20	24:50-53	